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# BY THE BEND OF THE RIVER

By the Bend of the River

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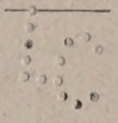
## TALES OF CONNOCK OLD AND NEW

BY

CHARLES HEBER CLARK
(MAX ADELER)

ILLUSTRATED



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OCT 13 1914

these rather frivolous little tales were written; at Connock, where the quiet river bends to the eastward, and below, where it turns sharply toward the south through the cleft in the long hill-range. In the bends of the river the wooded crests of the hills shadowed in the water indicate depth on depth, while the white streamers of the rushing locomotives double themselves far down beneath the unruffled surface, and all around is loveliness.

It is a great thing to live a long life in a region of entrancing beauty. Wherever you turn your eyes in our sweet country you have a view of fairyland.

All the far-reaching country-side is charming; there are no fairer views of billowy hills and grassy meadows. But the valley of the river presents the most alluring of them all, for the perfect landscape must include water.

The Connock folks do not care so much for straight rivers. Our little river sinuates; it winds in and out and around and about among the everlasting hills which are clothed by the green trees as with a rustling garment; and by one great bend, forming almost half a circle, the village lifts itself to the high hilltop, the fitting background for the shining stream at the base.

Before I start to turn this particular bend of the river I would say a word or two of thankfulness.

I thank:

The *Cosmopolitan Magazine* of New York for permission to reproduce the first tale with the accompanying illustration;

The *Saturday Evening Post* of Philadelphia for the generous contribution of several illuminating cuts;

The *Windsor Magazine* and The *Leisure Hour* of London, England. for pictures originally produced by them;

The people of Connock for all their love and kindness to me, long-continued; and

The Celestial Power which, amid the bitter tragedies of life, permits us to have the privilege of enjoying innocent mirth.

THE AUTHOR.

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# I

## GRANDMA PEVEY

THE small man with the side-whiskers and eyeglasses and the clerical coat and collar who sat near to us as we chatted in the cool of the evening on the hotel porch at Eaglesmere seemed to take no interest in the conversation until Judge Woodbury began to tell stories of peculiar people he had known. Then the stranger, who turned out to be the Reverend Mr. Jefferson, pastor of the Mission Church over near Aramink Creek, pulled his chair nearer and listened with close attention. When the Judge ended, Mr. Jefferson said:

"Pardon me, but speaking of peculiar people, did any of you ever happen to know Grandma Pevey—Mrs. Algernon Powell Pevey of Connock, Pennsylvania? No? Well, I don't want to appear to try to diminish the oddity of the persons to whom this gentleman here has alluded, but really it does seem to me that the oddity of Grandma Pevey was even more remarkable."

Judge Woodbury said he hoped the stranger would do the company the favor of presenting the facts respecting the old lady referred to.

"Grandma Pevey," said the minister, drawing his chair still nearer to the group and then tilting it backward against the wall of the house, "was a little woman with a remarkably fresh complexion

and the brightest black eyes you ever saw. She had had a life of hard work and care, but now in her last days a distant relative left her five thousand dollars and she began to think of really enjoying life. She would sit for hours, day after day, by the library window knitting or reading the newspaper or talking to Charley when Charley happened to be in the house. She was fondly attached to Charley, who fully reciprocated her affection.

"And besides, Charley was her sole heir and not the kind of a man to look coldly on five thousand dollars.

"Grandma Pevey was a little bit fidgety because her life was so quiet and uneventful and sometimes she would express a wish for something or other out of the ordinary. For example, I remember one morning she said to Charley she would give anything if she could see her own skeleton. But Charley soothed her and quieted her down and persuaded her to get her mind off of the subject; and of course the thing sort of blew over; though Grandma's mind almost all the time appeared to have a yearning for something or other; something quaint; she hardly knew what.

"One day while she was reading the morning paper she took her scissors and cut a paragraph out of it. Then she folded the slip and put it away in her work-bag. She said nothing to anybody, not even to Charley, but we saw that the paper had been cut and we noticed that Grandma would take out the slip every now and then and read it eagerly and sigh; and then she would have a far-away look in her dear old eyes.

"After a while she became moody and low-spirited. We had forgotten all about the newspaper clipping and we could not imagine what was the matter with her. Her depression worried us a good deal, and as it grew deeper, Charley one day went off for Dr. Bonum and had him come around to look into Grandma's case.

"The doctor examined her tongue and counted her pulse and listened to her heart-beat and breathing and asked her about her feelings and then he called Charley into the other room and said:

"'There is nothing the matter with Grandma physically. Her health is perfect. My belief is that she has something on her mind that is distressing her. If she won't confide it to you, take my advice and send for her minister. In my judgment she is in need of spiritual help of some kind.'

"So of course Charley went around in a hurry for the Reverend Doctor Potts and when he came he shut the door and sat close to Grandma and asked her to speak freely with him in the kind of frank confidence that a believer should have with her minister.

"Grandma was inclined to reserve, and so he went over everything in the Catechism and the Confessions, item by item, skipping nothing that was essential or even important, and he found Grandma absolutely sound on every point.

"He was as much puzzled as Dr. Bonum had been, but after a while he said to her:

"'My dear Mrs. Pevey, a very long experience with such matters induces me to believe that you

have upon your mind something that is worrying you.'

"'I have,' said Grandma.

"'You know me too well,' said Dr. Potts, 'to suspect me of any desire to be inquisitive with respect to things that you may wish to hold in sacred privacy. But sometimes a person can find courage to overcome the instinct of reserve in speaking to a clergyman whom she respects. Use your own pleasure about it; but, if you think I can help you at all, I beg you not to shrink from opening your mind to me. Are you longing for something?'

"'Yes,' said Grandma.

"Dr. Potts was silent for a moment. Then he said:

"'Well, I can do nothing more than to assure you of my tender sympathy and to declare that I will help you if I can.'

"'It is so queer,' said Grandma.

"'What is so queer?' asked Dr. Potts anxiously.

"'The object of my longing. It is so very, very queer.'

"'My dear Mrs. Pevey, the world is full of strange things. Indeed, we are all strange beings. You puzzle me. You want something queer, you say? Unusually queer? Queerer than anything you ever wanted before?'

"'Much queerer.'

"Dr. Potts said nothing, hoping that she might go on and free her mind. His curiosity was excited. But Grandma held her peace. Then Dr. Potts rose to take leave, and he was just about to shake hands with Grandma when she said to him:

"'Am I too big to go into a barrel?'

"Dr. Potts sat down quickly. His curiosity was becoming inflamed.

"'I don't know,' he said; 'I suppose not. But why—? Bless my soul, my dear Mrs. Pevey, what do you want to get into a barrel for?'

"'Read that,' said Grandma, handing Dr. Potts the slip from the newspaper.

"'Ah!' said Dr. Potts, as he ran his eye over the paragraph. 'Yes, I see. H'm! This is the story of a woman who actually went over Niagara Falls in a barrel.'

"'And I want to,' said Grandma Pevey, quietly.

"'Go over—go—you; you go over the Falls in a barrel! Why, Mrs. Pevey, it would be extraordinary. You would certainly be killed.'

"'But I'm going to do it,' said Grandma Pevey firmly, with her black eyes snapping. 'I'm going right over those Falls in a barrel; if that woman could do it I can do it.'

"But Grandma was stubborn and so Dr. Potts went out and hunted up Charley and told him all about it.

"'I am willing,' he said, 'to do almost anything in the line of duty, but the way I look at it, helping a venerable Christian woman to swim the Falls in a barrel hardly seems to me to be a sacerdotal function. If I were you I would go in and try to see if you can't persuade Grandma to hunger for something else.'

"Charley always was patient with Grandma and anxious to help her to have cheerfulness, so he under-

took, in the most affectionate way, to explain to her the objections to the project upon which she had set her heart.

" 'In the first place, Grandma,' he said, 'it would be a clear waste of effort. You go over safely; we fish you out and unbarrel you, and absolutely nothing has been accomplished excepting that you have revolved on your own axis, so to speak, and the human race remains just as wicked as ever. And, anyhow, if you will look backward through the pages of history you will find that the best women never went over the Falls in barrels; Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi, for example.'

" 'Maybe she was afraid it would make her giddy,' said Grandma.

" 'I don't think so,' said Charley. 'She was just trying to set a good example to her boys.'

" 'Charley,' she said, 'all my life, ever since I was a young girl, I've been sweeping and boiling and darning and cleaning up. Day after day, month after month, year after year, for seventy or more years: sweeping, boiling, darning and cleaning up. Now I am determined to have some excitement. I have earned it. The chance won't last much longer. I am positively determined to do what I want to do in spite of the opposition of my family.'

" 'Well, Grandma,' said Charley, 'I think I can say that I understand your feelings and enter into them. You *are* entitled to have some fun in your own way, and I tell you frankly that if I can see my way clear to help you I will.'

" 'Then get me a tight barrel at once.'

" 'I'm not sure I can find a really tight and strong barrel,' said Charley, 'or one that would fit you. If I knew a man who could measure you for a barrel and build it so's you would be comfortable, maybe I might hunt him up, but there's nobody of that kind anywhere about here.'

" 'Always something!' said Grandma. 'I don't want a tailor-made barrel, but one that will be tight to water and will set loosely on me. I saw one at Budge's grocery store on Tuesday.'

" 'But that is a vinegar barrel, Grandma; and I'd feel that it wasn't treating you right to send you over the Falls in such a thing as that. It would excite remark.'

" 'I was always fond of the smell of vinegar, and, no matter what you say, I have ordered Budge to send that barrel home, and if you won't help me take it to the Falls, I will check it through myself and hire a man up there to head me in and roll me over the edge.'

"So Charley saw there was no use trying to divert her mind from it and he went around to Budge's grocery store and bought the vinegar barrel and rolled it home. Then he fixed a three-legged stool on the inside and ran a rubber pipe with a valve through the head of the barrel, and arranged to have the head held on with iron clamps. When everything was ready he went in and said to Grandma Pevey:

" 'Grandma, I've got that barrel fixed up comfortable for you, but the thought occurred to me that it would be a good idea to make a trial trip, you might call it, over Gilroy's mill-dam, before we

try Niagara Falls. This would help you to get yourself kind of adjusted to the motion and to learn how it feels, and if all goes well we might do the Falls some day next month, when you will be sort of more at home in the water.'

"Grandma Pevey said she would just as lief try the mill-dam, so Charley put the barrel out in the side-yard and lifted her in, and when she had sat down on the stool he stuffed newspapers all around her to pack her and hold her steady, only leaving her arms free. The job was about done and he was almost ready to wheel her down to Gilroy's pond, when she said:

" 'Charley, I forgot my overshoes.'

" 'You won't want them, Grandma,' he said. But Grandma Pevey was a woman who knew her own mind, and she made Charley take out all those newspapers one by one, and when he had hunted up her overshoes, he lifted her out of the barrel and put them on for her and lifted her back again and packed her in the barrel a second time snug and tight so that she would be sure not to wobble.

" 'How do you feel now, Grandma?' he asked her.

" 'Perfectly comfortable,' she said, 'and perfectly happy.'

"Although he had some not unnatural misgivings, it was a source of satisfaction to Charley that he was able, in such a small way, to contribute to Grandma's enjoyment. He put the barrel on a wheelbarrow and stood the head with the iron clamps beside it and started off down the road towards Gilroy's.

"Several people asked him as he passed what he had in the barrel, but Charley thought it prudent to return evasive answers for fear of bringing ridicule upon a grandparent about whose reputation for good sense he was always solicitous.

"Charley lifted the barrel off at the very edge of the mill-pond, where the water was running fast, and he made Grandma promise that if she changed her mind and wanted to give the thing up after he had put the head on the barrel and screwed up the clamps, she would knock on the barrel twice, whilst if her enthusiasm still was high and she wanted to go over the dam, she would knock four times. Well, of course, when everything was ready she knocked four times and so Charley, faithful to the last, rolled the barrel into the water and let her go.

"At first the barrel went very fast and rolled over and over in a way that anybody would have thought would have made Grandma Pevey seasick; but it didn't. Then the barrel went slower and slower and threatened to go ashore; but Charley, loyal to Grandma in every drop of his blood, kept pushing it off with a fishing-pole.

"Then the barrel turned towards the dam and began to move that way pretty swiftly, until at last it made a dash for the edge, but instead of going over it stuck fast on something or other in the woodwork on the comb of the dam. Charley waited for a minute or two, hoping it would be swept onward by the current, but it wasn't. Then he tried to reach it with the fishing-pole, but the pole was too short.

"He made a start at wading out to the barrel, but he soon found the water was too deep for that, and then he was stumped. He sat down on the bank of the pool and felt like crying.

"If you love your own grandmother you can understand Charley's feelings.

"Extraordinary situation, wasn't it? But there was no time for inaction. There was Grandmother Pevey hanging over the edge of the falls and like as not she would suffocate or something unless prompt measures were taken.

"It occurred to Charley to go over and hunt up Gilroy and see if Gilroy had a boat he would be willing to lend. Gilroy was in the mill, all covered with flour, and he came right out with Charley. Gilroy's mind had difficulty to grasp the full purport of Charley's explanation.

" 'Your grandmother!' he exclaimed, 'caught on my dam! Why, where is she?'

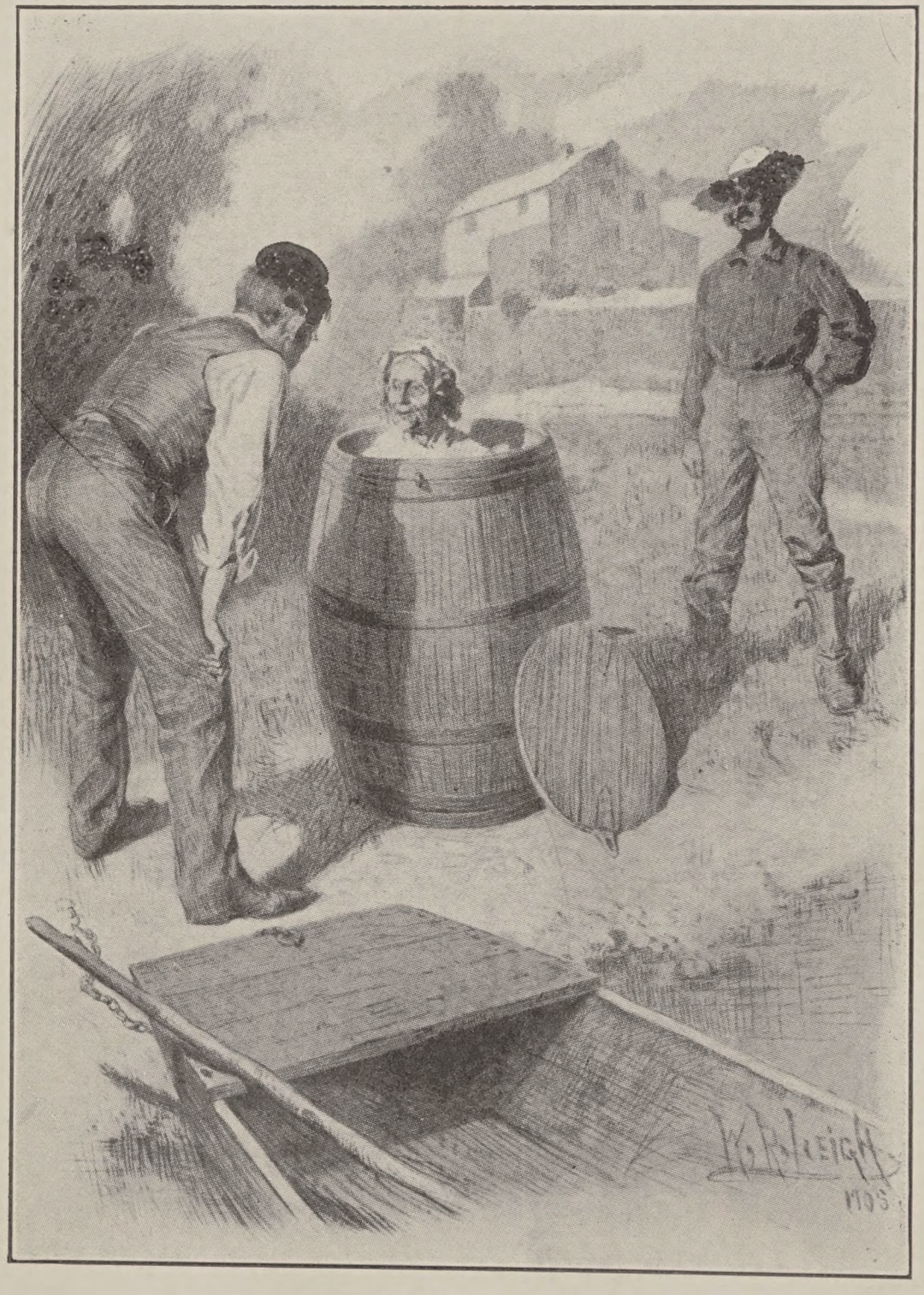
" 'That's her over there in the barrel,' said Charley.

" 'Barrelled her! Barrelled your grandmother and then tried to chuck her over my dam! Why, say, Charley, that's some kind of matricide or other, isn't it? It's a penitentiary offence.'

" 'She wanted me to do it,' said Charley, 'and I'll bet you a quarter she's enjoying herself this very minute; only I must shove her over or she'll cut me out of her will.'

"So Gilroy pulled out his flat-bottom boat and he and Charley poled her up close to the barrel and anchored her there so's she wouldn't be swept over, and when they got things fixed Charley called out:

" 'Are you all right, Grandma?'



They Got the Barrel Ashore

"And at once there were four knocks on the side of the barrel.

" 'Didn't I tell you?' said Charley to Gilroy. 'She's joyous and happy in there; having a bounding good time. Grandma Pevey's different from most old ladies.'

" 'Strikes me that way, too,' said Gilroy.

" 'And now,' said Charley, 'shall we push her over the dam or tow her home?'

" 'Tow her home, of course,' said Gilroy very decidedly. 'If she goes over and the barrel strikes the rocks at the foot of the dam there will be a dead grandma in there, sure.'

"So they tied a line to the ventilating pipe and got the barrel ashore and unscrewed the cover.

" 'How are you feeling now, Grandma?' asked Charley.

" 'Fine,' she answered. 'Did I go over the falls?'

" 'No, Mrs. Pevey,' said Gilroy, 'you didn't. If you had gone over you would now be in a better world. I wouldn't let Charley push you over.'

" 'But I'm going over Niagara,' said Grandma, rising from among the packing papers.

" 'Very well, madam,' said Gilroy, firmly. 'People can send their grandmas up Niagara Falls or down Niagara Falls or around Niagara Falls, or their grandpas or their aunts or all their kin near and far, I can't stop them, but this dam was built for industrial purposes and I'm not going to allow it to be used for homicidal experiments on grandmas.'

" 'I think you are real mean,' said Grandma Pevey, as Charley lifted her out of the barrel and shook her free from the newspapers.

"So Grandma started off home, Charley rolling the barrel after her and turning it over in his mind how on earth he was ever going to contrive to keep her from trying the Falls. Grandma had a good cry when she got back in her own rocking chair, but she was firmer than ever in her resolve to going to Niagara.

"As Grandma still had her resolution unshaken, Charley was at his wits' end to know just what to do. At last he sent again for Dr. Bonum and said to him that certainly the recent marvelous advances in medical science must have resulted in the discovery of some kind of a porous plaster or pharmaceutical preparation or something that would successfully counteract a maddening thirst for going over Niagara Falls. But Dr. Bonum said that if any inventor had got up such a thing he had kept it perfectly quiet.

"Then Dr. Bonum, after turning the subject over in his mind, said the only thing he could think of to do would be to send down to the city for Professor Lemuel Gudger of the Eclectic Medical College, who had some fame as specialist in dealing effectively with unaccountable yearnings.

"Did you know Gudger? He was slick. Professor at the College and some kind of a horse-doctor; and they did say he had gifts at second sight and as a snake-charmer, besides doing conjuring sometimes.

"However, when he came up to Connock and saw Grandma, Charley introduced him as the government inspector of the Falls; which of course seems

perfectly scandalous unless you understand that Charley really hated falsehood and would never have dreamed of lying excepting when he felt as if he must do it to soothe Grandma.

"It was plain enough to see that she took to the professor at once; and when he had cross-examined her and got the hang, so to speak, of her case, he led Dr. Bonum into the next room and shut the door and said he thought the best way of dealing with this interesting and peculiar mental phenomenon would be to appear to coincide with Grandma Pevey's ideas and to send her over the Falls by suggestion.

"Dr. Bonum cleared his throat and tried to look as if he understood, and then he said:

" 'And your idea is—?'

" 'To mesmerize her. With a few passes I throw her into a trance, bringing her directly under the influence of my vibrations, and when I am in control I excite increased activity in the cells of her cerebral cortex. All I have to do then is to give her a psychical impression that she is going over the Falls, and over she goes; or rather, over she thinks she goes. It's just the same thing, and she has quite as much fun out of it.'

"Dr. Bonum said it was all right. If Grandma Pevey could be satisfied that way, he could; and Charley said he didn't believe the thing would work, but he was willing to try anything that would give Grandma peace without being actually chucked over Niagara.

"Gudger then told Grandma that he had come

to see her to meet her views and all she had to do now was to name the day and the government would place the entire Falls at her disposal.

"Grandma timidly asked him if the President didn't think it a little queer for her to want to do such a thing. But the professor said to her:

"'Not at all! Not at all, dear madam! It is perfectly reasonable for you to desire to plunge over Niagara. There is no danger. It is just a delightful afternoon recreation for respectable old ladies. The government not only allows it, but encourages it. As soon as we can get Congress to make the requisite appropriation we are going to supply free barrels and to arrange that parties can have their photos taken sitting in a barrel with the Horseshoe Falls and the rainbow in the background. The Committee on Ways and Means are now shaping up an act so that if you are not satisfied when you made the descent, you can have the head out of your barrel and spend the closing hours of the day drifting about the Whirlpool just like a merry-go-round.'

"'But,' said Grandma Pevey, 'has the government any objection to vinegar barrels?'

"'No, madam,' says the professor. 'It prefers them. It has forbidden coal-oil barrels because they make the Falls smell, but vinegar barrels are all right.'

"Then Grandma sighed and said she wished she could go over this very day. She was so much excited about the trip that she felt as if she could hardly wait.

"Professor Gudger took from his pocket a shiny bit of silver about as big as a dollar, and said:

"'Now look intently on that, Grandma, and fix your mind on the Falls. Now look and look and look,' he said, and then he made some passes with his right hand and dusted her forehead with his thumb. In two minutes Grandma Pevey was dead asleep.

"Then Professor Gudger began to make her believe she was on the train for Niagara, that she got there all right and that Charley was close behind her with the barrel. 'And now,' he said, 'you are seated in the barrel with your overshoes on and now we fasten the head on the barrel and roll you into the rapids. Do you hear the Falls roar?' asked the professor.

"'Plainly,' said Grandma Pevey.

"'Now you are tossing in the wild waste of waters and whirling round and round. How does it feel?'

"'Per-fect-ly de-light-ful, and I see the rainbow.'

"'How very vivid!' said Dr. Bonum. 'She must see it right through the barrel.'

"'It is a mere psychic impression,' said Professor Gudger, 'wholly apart from the nerves of the visual organs. Now, Grandma, you go to the brink of the Falls with a rush. You plunge, you scurry, you swoop, you wobble and cavort. Hah! Look out! There you are. You hover on the very brink.'

"Grandma clutched her chair with both hands and held her breath, while a tender smile overspread her dear old wrinkled face.

"'We are reaching her subliminal consciousness,' said Professor Gudger.

"'Gee-e-e-Whop! Over you go! Down you

tumble. You reach bottom. Bang! Hah! Why, there you are, Grandma. Up comes the barrel safe and tight — and now it floats ashore. Lovely, wasn't it?'

" 'It's the happiest day of my life,' said Grandma Pevey, 'and now I want to go around the Whirlpool.'

" 'Not today, Grandma,' said the professor. 'The water is drained off because the government is engaged in putting in a new whizzer and making repairs. You can go any day next week.'

"Then the professor made her believe she was fished out and unbarrelled and brought home on the train. And when he undid her and fetched her out of the trance, she looked around kind of queer for a minute and said:

" 'Charley, were you there?'

" 'Yes, Grandma.'

" 'Well, didn't I tell you I could do it? Now do you believe me? And as for Mr. Gilroy and his trumpery little mill-dam, I have just no opinion at all of them.'

"If we could only foresee consequences. Far, far better would it have been for Charley if he had been firm with Grandma Pevey at the start and had refused to aid and abet her in her insane desire to go over the Falls. For, having tried it once, as she believed, nothing would do but she must try it again and again; and so Professor Gudger had to run up to Connock four or five times a week and stop for meals and mesmerize Grandma instead of letting her go to Dorcas Society meetings and give her

delusive trips over Niagara; and she got fonder and fonder of him until one day, when she was called hence, and her friends opened her will, it was found she had cut off Charley with a blessing and the bequest of the vinegar barrel, and had left the whole of that five thousand dollars to Professor Gudger. Hard, wasn't it? Hard for Charley, I mean. He was so mad he wouldn't go to the funeral, and to this day he declares that the words 'Grandma' and 'ingratitude' mean one and the same thing to him."

The supper bell rang as Mr. Jefferson completed the narrative and as he moved toward the dining-room Judge Woodbury whispered to me:

"Did you notice he didn't give Charley's last name? Well, the reason is he is Charley himself."

## II

## THE MILLIONAIRES

IT had always been one of the luxuries of the Grimeses to consider what they would do if they were rich. Many a time George and his wife, sitting together of a summer evening upon the porch of their own pretty house in our village, had looked at the long unoccupied country seat of General Jenkins, just across the way, and wished they had money enough to buy the place and give it to the village for a park.

Mrs. Grimes often said that if she had a million dollars the very first thing she would do would be to purchase the Jenkins place. George's idea was to tear down the fences, throwing everything open, and to dedicate the grounds to the public. Mrs. Grimes wanted to put a great free library in the house and to have a club for poor working-women in the second-floor rooms. George estimated that one hundred thousand dollars would be enough to carry out their plans. Say fifty thousand dollars for purchase money, and then fifty more invested at six per cent to maintain the place.

"But if we had a million," said George, "I think I should give one hundred and fifty thousand to the enterprise and do the thing right. There would always be repairs and new books to buy and matters of that kind."

But this was not the only benevolent dream of these kind-hearted people. They liked to think of the joy that would fill the heart of that poor, struggling pastor, Mr. Borrow, if they could tell him that they would pay the whole debt of the Presbyterian Church, six thousand dollars.

"And I would have his salary increased, George," said Mrs. Grimes. "It is shameful to compel that poor man to live on a thousand dollars."

"Outrageous," said George. "I would guarantee him another thousand, and maybe more; but we should have to do it quietly for fear of wounding him."

"That mortgage on the Methodist Church," said Mrs. Grimes. "Imagine the happiness of those poor people in having it lifted! And so easy to do, too, if we had a million dollars."

"Certainly, and I would give the Baptists a handsome pipe-organ instead of that wheezing melodeon. Dreadful, isn't it?"

"You can get a fine organ for $2,000," said Mrs. Grimes.

"Yes, of course, but I wouldn't be mean about it; not mean on a million dollars. Let them have a really good organ, say for $3,000 or $3,500; and then build them a parsonage, too."

"The fact is," said Mrs. Grimes, "that people like us really ought to have large wealth, for we know how to use it rightly."

"I often think of that," answered George. "If I know my own soul I long to do good. It makes my heart bleed to see the misery about us, misery I am

absolutely unable to relieve. I am sure that if I really had a million dollars I should not want to squander it on mere selfish pleasure, nor would you. The greatest happiness any one can have is in making others happy; and it is a wonder to me that our rich people don't see this. Think of old General Jenkins and his twenty million dollars, and what we would do for our neighbors with a mere fraction of that!"

"For we really want nothing much for ourselves," said Mrs. Grimes. "We are entirely satisfied with what we have in this lovely little home and with your $2,000 salary from the bank."

"Almost entirely," said George. "There are some few little things we might add in—just a few, but with a million we could easily get them and more and have such enormous amounts of money left."

"Almost the first thing I would do," said Mrs. Grimes, "would be to settle a comfortable living for life on poor Isaac Wickersham. That man, George, crippled as he is, lives on next to nothing. I don't believe he has two hundred dollars a year."

"Well, we could give him twelve hundred and not miss it, and then give the same sum to Widow Clausen. She can barely keep alive."

"And there's another thing I'd do," said Mrs. Grimes. "If we kept a carriage I would never ride up alone from the station or for pleasure. I would always find some poor or infirm person to go with me. How people can be so mean about their horses and carriages as some rich people are, is beyond my comprehension."

It is a delightful pastime, expending in imagination large sums of money that you haven't got. You need not regard considerations of prudence. You can give free rein to your feelings and bestow your bounty with reckless profusion. You obtain almost all the pleasure of large giving without any cost. You feel nearly as happy as if you were actually doing the good deeds which are the children of your fancy.

George Grimes and his wife had considered so often the benevolences they would like to undertake if they had a million dollars that they could have named them all at a moment's notice without referring to a memorandum. Nearly everybody has engaged in this pastime, but the Grimeses were to have the singular experience of the power to make their dream a reality placed in their hands.

For one day George came flying home from the bank with a letter from the executors of General Jenkins (who died suddenly in Mexico a week or two before) announcing that the General had left a million dollars and the country-seat in our village to George Grimes.

"And to think, Mary Jane," said George when the first delirium of their joy had passed, "the dear old man was kind enough to say—here, let me read it to you again from the quotation from the will in the letter: 'I make this bequest because, from repeated conversations with the said George Grimes, I know he will use it aright.' So you see, dear, it was worth while, wasn't it, to express our benevolent wishes sometimes when we spoke of the needs of those who are around us?"

"Yes, and the General's kind remark makes this a sacred trust, which we are to administer for him."

"We are only his stewards."

"Stewards of his bounty."

"So that we must try to do exactly what we think he would have liked us to do," said George.

"Nothing else, dear?"

"Why, of course we are to have some discretion, some margin; and besides, nobody could guess precisely what he would have us do."

"But now, at any rate, George, we can realize fully one of our longing desires and give to the people the lovely park and library?"

George seemed thoughtful. "I think, Mary Jane," he said, "I would not act precipitately about that. Let us reflect upon the matter. It might seem unkind to the memory of the General just to give away his gift almost before we get it."

They looked at each other, and Mrs. Grimes said:

"Of course there is no hurry. And we are really a little cramped in this house. The nursery is much too small for the children and there is not a decent fruit tree in the garden."

"The thing can just stay open until we have time to consider."

"But I am so glad for dear old Isaac. We can take care of him, anyhow, and of Mrs. Clausen, too."

"To be sure," said George. "The obligation is sacred. Let me see, how much was it we thought Isaac ought to have?"

"Twelve hundred a year."

"H-m-m," murmured George, "and he has two

hundred now; an increase of five hundred per cent. I'm afraid it will turn the old man's head. However, I wouldn't exactly promise anything for a few days yet."

"Many a man in his station of life is happy upon a thousand."

"A thousand! Why, my dear, there is not a man of his class in town that makes six hundred."

"George?"

"Well?"

"We must keep horses, and there is no room to build a stable on this place."

"No."

"Could we live here and keep the horses in the General's stables across the way, even if the place were turned into a park?"

"That is worth thinking of."

"And George?"

"Well, dear?"

"It's a horrid thing to confess, but do you know, George, I've felt myself getting meaner and meaner and stingier and stingier ever since you brought the good news."

George tried to smile, but the effort was unsuccessful; he looked half vexed and half ashamed.

"Oh, I wouldn't put it just that way," he said. "The news is so exciting that we hardly know at once how to adjust ourselves to it. We are simply prudent. It would be folly to plunge ahead without any caution at all. How much did you say the debt of the Presbyterian Church is?"

"Six thousand, I think."

"A good deal for a little church like that to owe."

"Yes, but—"

"You didn't promise anything, Mary Jane, did you, to Mrs. Borrow?"

"No, for I had nothing to promise. But I did tell her on Sunday that I would help them liberally if I could."

"They will base large expectations on that, sure. I wish you hadn't said it just that way. Of course, we are bound to help them, but I should like to have a perfectly free hand in doing it."

There was silence for a moment, while both looked through the window at the General's place across the way.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" asked Mrs. Grimes.

"Lovely. That little annex on the side would make a snug den for me; and imagine the prospect from that south bedroom window! You would enjoy every look at it."

"George?"

"What?"

"George, dear, tell me frankly, do you really feel in your heart as generous as you did yesterday?"

"Now, my dear, why press that matter? Call it meaner or narrower or what you will; maybe I am a little more so than I was, but there is nothing to be ashamed of. It is the conservative instinct asserting itself; the very same faculty in man that holds society together. I will be liberal enough when the time comes, never fear. I am not going to disregard what one may call the pledges of a lifetime. We will treat everybody right, the Presbyterian Church

and Mr. Borrow included. His salary is a thousand, I think you said?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm willing to make it fifteen hundred right now, if you are."

"You said, you remember, it ought to be two thousand."

"Who said so?"

"You did, on the porch here the other evening."

"I never said so. There isn't a preacher around here who gets that much. The Episcopalians with their rich people only give eighteen hundred."

"And a house."

"Very well, the Presbyterians can build a house if they want to."

"You consent then to pledge five hundred more to the minister's salary?"

"I said I would if you would, but my advice is just to let the matter go over until tomorrow or next day, when the whole thing can be considered."

"Very well, but, George, sixty thousand dollars is a great deal of money, and we certainly can afford to be liberal with it, for the General's sake as well as for our own."

"Everything depends upon how you look at it. In one way the sum is large. In another way it isn't. General Jenkins had just twenty times sixty thousand. Tremendous, isn't it? He might just as well have left us another million. He is in heaven and wouldn't miss it. Then we could have some of our plans more fully carried out."

"I hate to be thought covetous," answered Mrs.

Grimes, "but I do wish he had put on that other million."

The next day Mr. Grimes, while sitting with his wife after supper, took a memorandum from his pocket and said:

"I've been jotting down some figures, Mary Jane, just to see how we will come out with our income of sixty thousand dollars."

"Well?"

"If we give the place across the street for a park and a library and a hundred thousand dollars with which to run it, we shall have just nine hundred thousand left."

"Yes."

"We shall want horses, say a carriage-pair, and a horse for the station-wagon. Then I must have a saddle horse, and there must be a pony for the children. I thought also you might as well have a gentle pair for your own driving. That makes six. Then there will have to be, say, three stable-men. Now, my notion is that we should put up a larger house farther up town, with all the necessary stabling. Count the cost of the house and suitable appointments, and add in the four months' trip to Europe which we decided yesterday to take next summer, and how much of the fifty-four thousand do you think we shall have left at the end of the year?"

"But why build the house from our income?"

"Mary Jane, I want to start out with the fixed idea that we will not cut into our principal."

"Well, how much will we have over?"

"Not a dollar! The outlay for the year will approximate fifty-six thousand dollars."

Bad News for Mrs. Grimes

"Large, isn't it?"

"And yet I don't see how we can reduce it if we are to live as people in our circumstances might reasonably be expected to live."

"We must cut off something."

"That is what I think. If we give the park and the library building to the town, why not let the town pay the cost of caring for them?"

"Then we could save the interest on that other hundred thousand."

"Exactly, and nobody will suffer. The gift of the property alone is magnificent. Who is going to complain of us? We will decide now to give the real estate and then stop."

Two days later Mr. Grimes came home early from the bank with a letter in his hand. He looked white and for a moment after entering his wife's room he could hardly command utterance.

"I have some bad news for you, dear—terrible news," he said, almost falling into a chair.

The thought flashed through Mrs. Grimes's mind that the General had made a later will which had been found and which revoked the bequest to George. She could hardly whisper:

"What is it?"

"The executors write to me that the million left to me by the General draws only about four per cent interest."

"George!"

"Four per cent! Forty thousand dollars instead of sixty thousand! What a frightful loss! Twenty thousand dollars a year done at one breath!"

"Are you sure, George?"

"Sure! Here is the letter. Read it yourself. One-third of our fortune swept away before we have a chance to touch it!"

"I think it was very unkind of the General to turn the four per cents over to us while somebody else gets the six per cents. How *could* he do such a thing? And you such an old friend, too!"

"Mary Jane, that man always had a mean streak in him. I've said so to myself many a time. But, anyhow, this frightful loss settles one thing; we can't afford to give that property across the street to the town. We must move over there to live, and even then, with the huge expense of keeping such a place in order, we shall have to watch things narrowly to make ends meet."

"And you never were good at retrenching, George."

"But we've *got* to retrench. Every superfluous expenditure must be cut off. As for the park and free library, that seems wild now, doesn't it? I don't regret abandoning the scheme. The people of this town never did appreciate public spirit or generosity, did they?"

"Never."

"I'm very sorry you spoke to Mrs. Borrow about helping their church. Do you think she remembers it?"

"She met me today and said they were expecting something handsome."

Mr. Grimes laughed bitterly.

"That's always the way with those people. They are the worst beggars! When a lot of folks get to-

gether and start a church it is almost indecent for them to come running around to ask other folks to support it. I have half a notion not to give them a cent."

"Not even for Mr. Borrow's salary?"

"Certainly not! Half the clergymen in the United States get less than a thousand dollars a year; why can't he do as the rest do? Am I to be called upon to support a lot of poor preachers? A good deal of nerve is required, I think, to ask such a thing of me."

Two weeks afterward Mr. Grimes and his wife sat together again on the porch in the cool of the evening.

"Now," said Grimes, "let us together go over these charities we were talking about and be done with them. Let us start with the tough fact staring us in the face that, with only one million dollars at four per cent and all our new and necessary expenses, we shall have to look sharp or I'll be borrowing money to live on in less than eight months."

"Well," said Mrs. Grimes, "what shall we cut out? Would you give up the Baptist organ that we used to talk about?"

"Mary Jane, it is really surprising how you let such things as that stay in your mind. I considered that organ scheme abandoned long ago."

"Is it worth while, do you think, to do anything with the Methodist Church mortgage?"

"How much is it?"

"Three thousand dollars, I think."

"Yes, three thousand from forty thousand leaves

us only thirty-seven thousand. Then, if we do it for the Methodists, we shall have to do it for the Lutherans and the Presbyterians and swarms of churches all around the country. We can't make flesh of one and fowl of another. It will be safer to treat them all alike; and more just, too. I think we ought to try to be just with them, don't you, Mary Jane?"

"And Mr. Borrow's salary?"

"Ha! Yes! That is a thousand dollars, isn't it? It does seem but a trifle. But they have no children and they have themselves completely adjusted to it. And suppose we should raise it one year and die the next? He would feel worse than if he had just gone along in the old way. When a man is fully adjusted to a thing it is the part of prudence, it seems to me, just to let him alone."

"I wish we could—"

"Oh, well, if you want it; but I propose that we don't make them the offer until next year or the year after. We shall have our matters arranged better by that time."

"And now about Isaac Wickersham?"

"Have you seen him lately?"

"Two or three days ago."

"Did he seem discontented or unhappy?"

"No."

"You promised to help him?"

"What I said was, 'We are going to do something for you, Isaac.' "

"Something! That commits us to nothing in particular. Was it your idea, Mary Jane, to make him an allowance?"

"Yes."

"There you cut into our insufficient income again. I don't see how we can afford it with all these expenses heaping up on us; really I don't."

"But we must give him something; I promised it."

George thought a moment and then said:

"This is the end of September and I sha'n't want this straw hat that I have been wearing all summer. Suppose we give him that. A good straw hat is 'something.' "

"You remember Mrs. Clausen, George?"

"Have we got to load up with her too?"

"Let me explain. You recall that I told her I would try to make her comfortable, and when I found that our circumstances were going to be really straitened, I sent her my red flannel petticoat with my love, for I know she can be comfortable in that."

"Of course she can."

"So this afternoon when I came up from the city she got out of the train with me and I felt so half-ashamed of the gift that I pretended not to see her and hurried out to the carriage and drove quickly up the hill. She is afraid of horses, anyhow."

"Always was," said George.

"But, George, I don't feel quite right about it, yet; the gift of a petticoat is rather stingy, isn't it."

"No, I don't think so."

"And, George, to be perfectly honest with ourselves now, don't you think we are a little bit meaner than we were, say, last June?"

George cleared his throat and hesitated, and then he said:

"I admit nothing, excepting that the only people who are fit to have money are the people who know how to take care of it."

## III

## THE GREAT NATURAL HEALER

THE man whose chair was next to mine on the deck of the steamer *Arcturus* as she speeded toward Liverpool, had never been inclined to talk freely when we found ourselves together. He had responded with politeness if a word or two had been addressed to him, but had refrained from saying anything that would have led to further conversation. He was a man of pleasing appearance, with brown hair and beard, and with kindly brown eyes looking through gold spectacles. He seemed to me to be about thirty-five years old, and his face made an impression of refinement and intelligence. I should have thought him, at a glance, a man who could talk agreeably and with profit to his hearer.

The sea was rough one afternoon, and as we sat side by side watching the tossing waves and the rolling of the ship, I was impelled to say to him:

"I wonder if there really is any remedy for sea-sickness?"

He started, almost as if I had struck him. Half raising himself from his recumbent position, he looked at me in a frightened way, and I, thoughtlessly, not knowing precisely what to do or say in such a queer, unexpected situation, asked further:

"You don't know of one, do you?"

Instead of making answer, the color left his face

and he struggled out of his chair and his wraps and dashed toward his deck state-room, which he entered, closing the door.

Of course I thought my words had operated upon his mind by suggestion so that he had felt sea-sickness coming on. I was sorry I had alluded to the matter, but I considered that he would have had the attack at any rate, sooner or later, and so I could not feel very culpable.

But an hour afterward I saw him again upon the deck, appearing to be perfectly well, and in a few moments the deck-steward came and removed his chair to the other side of the steamer. Then I felt angry; and I resolved to try to discover in what manner I had given offence to him by making what seemed to be an inoffensive observation.

For two days he evaded me, but on the third day I found him hidden in a corner of the smoking-room; I looked him in the face, and said to him:

"I am sorry if I offended you by what I said the other day. Of course, you know, I had no idea that my remark would be disagreeable."

His eyes were cast downward for a moment and he hesitated to reply. Then he said:

"It was not disagreeable, I assure you. Not that, but——"

Then he stopped and looked again at the table.

I was about to turn away, when he raised his hand with an appealing gesture, and said:

"You simply frightened me."

"I did! I frightened you? I don't at all understand."

"How could you?" he replied, with a faint smile. "My conduct must have seemed very strange and rude. I should like——" he said, and then his voice and his eyes dropped, and a few seconds elapsed before he spoke again. "I should like to explain the matter to you—to tell you my story, if you would care to hear it, and if you would accept it in confidence."

I could not refuse his offer. Besides, my curiosity was strongly aroused. He invited me into the parlor adjoining his state-room, and when he had locked the door and both of us were seated, he said:

"My name is John P. Tadcaster, and I am the victim of misfortune; the most strange and dreadful misfortune. I am, in every fiber of my nature, a truthful man; but as you look at me sitting here, I am incarnate falsehood; yes, a living, walking, miserable mass of deception."

He placed his elbows upon the little table and covered his face with his hands. I thought he would fall to weeping. Recovering himself, he said:

"About a year ago I made up my mind to learn the Spanish language, with the notion that I could enter the consular service of the United States and obtain appointment to one of the South American stations. That I might concentrate my attention upon this study and get away from all business and social diversion, I went up to the little town of Borax, in Sullivan County, Pennsylvania. Borax, you may know, but probably you don't know, is away off in the mountains among the hemlock forests, and is really almost as much apart from civilization

as if it were in the wilds of Oregon. The people are simple-minded, and usually ignorant, and yet many of them are quite well off—the hemlock-bark industry having brought no little money to the town and the neighborhood. Borax has a fairly good hotel, and I had secured a suite of rooms on the second floor, looking right out over the tiny lake. It was an ideal place for study.

"The stage that brought me from the railway station, eleven miles away, reached Borax at four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. As I stepped from the stage, in front of the hotel, and was about to direct the host to care for my trunk, a man rushed up to me in a condition of excitement and asked:

" 'Are you a doctor?'

" 'What's the matter?' I asked.

"That was a fatal response. Why did I not simply say 'No,' and turn away? Alas! if we could foresee the consequences of our words and actions! The man at once concluded that I was a physician, and seizing my arm he hurried me around the corner to the porch of a house where a crowd was collected. We pushed through the people, and gaining the porch, I found a boy of fourteen lying upon the floor with a gash in his head and with his face very pale.

" 'He fell off of the porch roof, doctor,' said one of the bystanders, addressing me, 'and cut his head and broke his leg.'

" 'Why don't you send for a doctor?' I asked. 'You have a doctor in Borax?'

" 'Yes,' was the reply, 'Dr. Bowser; but he went

down to Harrisburg yesterday and won't be home till Monday.'

"Without saying more, I had the blood washed from the boy's head, and the hair clipped away, and then I drew the slight cut together and fastened it with some court-plaster. Then I felt the boy's leg. I know absolutely nothing about such things, and the leg did not seem to me to be broken. But the boy said it was, and all his friends and all the bystanders said it was, and who was I to disregard such testimony? I sent for two shingles and muslin and tied the leg up in splints as well as I could. I am apt to be feverish when I go into a new country, so I always carry quinine pills with me and I never leave home without paregoric. I felt somewhat uneasy about the boy when the leg was bandaged, and I had an impulse to go to the very end of my resources so as to give him all the chances that were within reach. I gave him two quinine pills and a teaspoonful of paregoric, and had him carried home on a plank and put to bed.

"Really, I thought no more about the boy, but turned at once to my studies.

"On Sunday morning, just as I had finished breakfast, Andrews, the landlord, told me that some of my friends wished to see me on the hotel porch. I went out, and there was the wounded boy, and Dr. Bowser (who had returned a day sooner than he had expected), and half the people in Borax. Three rousing cheers greeted me as I came through the doorway. The boy rushed up and threw his arms about me; his mother kissed me; the man who

had called me to the case cried vehemently, 'Hurrah for doc!' while Dr. Bowser seized my hand and said:

"'Wonderful, doctor, wonderful! I never saw a cure like it! A broken leg knit and well and sound in four days! Amazing! I congratulate you! If you're going to stay in Borax I might as well quit!'

"I hardly knew what to say, but I was resolved to have no misunderstanding of my position, so I exclaimed:

"'Gentlemen, I am no physician. I assure you I never opened a medical book in my life. I don't know one bone from another.'

"A perfect howl of derisive laughter expressive of unbelief arose from the crowd. Everybody thought my protest just a bit of fun, or else the impression was that I had resolved to pretend ignorance so that I could have rest while I stayed at Borax.

"Dr. Bowser laughed more heartily than any of the other Boracians, and, taking me by the hand, he said, 'It's of no use, doctor. Skill like that can't be disguised. It was masterly.'

"'I don't believe the boy's leg was really broken,' I said.

"'Yes it was, doc,' shouted at least a dozen men in the crowd, addressing their answer to Doctor Bowser. 'I seen it as limp as a wet towel,' said the man who first summoned me to take the case. 'The leg was broken all to flinders; you could fold it like a two-foot rule.'

"'Gentlemen!' I said, 'I have come here to study. I am no doctor. I am in blind, blank ignorance of the whole business. I thank you for your kind

behavior and your good wishes, but I ask as a favor that you will believe me and will not attempt again while I am in Borax to call me to a case of illness.'

"I could perceive that nobody believed me, not even Dr. Bowser. Everybody laughed, and Dr. Bowser said, shaking my hand: 'All right, doctor. We shall respect your wish to be let alone; but I think you might help out a poor fellow like me if I get into a tight place.'

"I withdrew to my room. Well, well indeed, had it been for me if I had taken the stage on Monday morning and for ever fled from Borax!

"For ten days I had peace, and in the quiet of that lovely neighborhood, in the bracing mountain air, I felt that I could conquer any branch of learning. I made wonderful headway with my Spanish, and really the incident to which I have referred had almost passed from my mind.

"But one day Mrs. Andrews, the wife of the man who kept the hotel, knocked upon my chamber-door, and when I opened it she said: 'Doctor, my little girl seems quite ill. Won't you come downstairs and look at her?'

"I had admired this child, and more than once had taken her upon my knee and fondled her. I said to the mother, 'Mrs. Andrews, I am very, very sorry, but I am not a physician, and it would not be right for me to treat Mary. Why don't you call for Dr. Bowser?'

"'He has gone across the mountain,' she answered, 'and cannot get back until tomorrow.

Please, please come and see Mary. I'm afraid she is very sick.'

"'Mrs. Andrews,' I said, 'if I could help her I should be glad to go, but I cannot. It would be wrong for me to attend her, I might do serious injury.'

"Mrs. Andrews looked at me with disbelief plainly depicted upon her countenance, and then she began to cry. Imagine my feelings! To have a mother, a respectable woman, regard me as a hard-hearted brute who would not move a step to save the life of her darling little one! You can guess what I suffered. I did not know what more to say, and Mrs. Andrews, with her apron to her face, turned away. I could hear her sobbing all the way downstairs. Then plainly I heard her relate to her husband, in a broken, tearful voice, how I had refused to see the child.

"Andrews was angry. He applied to me several revolting expressions; and three or four men who were sitting in the hotel office indicated that they entered fully into the view he took of me.

"'I'll go up and see him,' I heard Andrews say. He came up hurriedly, and three of his friends came with him. His tone lost some of its severity as he presented himself to me.

"'Doctor,' he began.

"'Not doctor, if you please, Mr. Andrews, I am not a physician.'

"'That kind of thing is all very well, doctor,' he replied, 'when there's nothin' the matter. Ef you want to hide or keep a secret I'm willin' to help you;

but I put it to you as between man and man, is it fair to let a poor little innocent baby suffer because you are up to somethin'? Hang me ef I think it is.'

"'Try the man who keeps the drug store,' I said.

"'Try no man in no drug store!' he answered with scorn and anger. 'Not while a big city doctor's in this yer very house. I guess not! Now, will you come and cure that child or won't you come? That's what I want to know. If she dies her blood'll be on your head.'

"'Yes,' exclaimed Fullerton, the butcher, who had come upstairs with Andrews, 'and there'll be more blood too. I'll bet you'll see some lynch law in this town.'

"'I'll get the rope myself,' added Burns, the tax-collector. 'See ef I don't.'

"'Gentlemen,' I said, 'on my word of honor I am not a physician and in my ignorance I may do the child grave harm, but, as you will persist in refusing to believe what I say, I suppose I must see the child. Lead me to her.'

"The poor little one had a high fever and her face was crimson. I hadn't the least idea what to do. To save my life I couldn't remember any of the medicines commonly given to fever patients. But I took out my paregoric bottle, put six drops in a spoon with water and chipped a fragment from a quinine pill and gave it to the child. Then I told her mother to give her as much very cold water as she wanted.

"That was at two o'clock in the afternoon. I went out for my usual walk down the ravine through

which the lake found its outlet. The day was so pleasant that I took my book with me and sat for two or three hours by the stream studying. I heard the supper-bell ringing as I approached the hotel; but nobody was in the dining-room. There upon the porch stood Mrs. Andrews smiling and holding in her arms the child, from whom every particle of fever had fled, and Andrews and Fullerton and Burns and the waitress and the bartender and the stableman were there with her.

"They gave a shout as I appeared, and Andrews, coming toward me and clasping my hand, said:

" 'Doctor, I don't understand your way of behavin', but sure and certain you've got hold of doctorin' by the right end; the baby's well.'

" 'Well?' I exclaimed.

" 'Perfectly,' said Mrs. Andrews. 'The fever stopped ten minutes after you gave her that wonderful medicine. Feel her pulse.'

" 'I couldn't tell anything about it,' I said, 'if I should feel her pulse. It was the cold water that cured her.'

"Everybody, from Andrews down to the stableman, roared with laughter, and then Andrews said:

" 'Doctor, I don't care how queer you behave; all I got to say is that you kin stay in this yer house board-free's long as you've a mind to. It's magic!'

" 'He's just a Great Natural Healer,' said Burns.

"I had to kiss the child, who certainly looked well, and then we passed into the supper-room.

"Borax fairly rang with the report of this marvelous cure, and the hotel office was crowded all

the evening with people who discussed it. My popularity was so great that I could not venture out upon the porch without having a dozen or two men coming up to have the honor of shaking hands with me.

"On the next Saturday night while I was standing in the office the stage drove up and a woman got out and called for some one to help her boy to descend. The boy was about twelve years old, and he was so ill that Andrews had to carry him into the house.

" 'Here's another chance for you, doctor,' the landlord said as he passed me.

" 'No,' I answered, 'if the boy's sick send for Dr. Bowser.'

"The mother, Mrs. Collins, was quite willing to do so, but of course Bowser was away; he was always away; and so, unless I wanted to be regarded as an inhuman monster, I simply *had* to go to attend the patient. From the way Geordie (they called him Geordie) looked I was sure he would be dead before morning anyhow, and though I hadn't the least notion whether his malady was typhoid fever or measles, I gave him one quinine pill and a teaspoonful of paregoric, as usual. Can you blame me? What would you have done? They were the only medicines I knew about, and I thought they were harmless.

"You will hardly believe me, but after leaving the boy I hadn't got to the bottom of the stairs before I heard exclamations of joy, and—well, to make the story short, Geordie sat up in half-an-hour

and at dinner next day he ate enough to satisfy three ordinary boys. I never knew whether he had over-eaten himself or was just shamming. Anyhow, Dr. Bowser came round that same evening, and asked me to go with him to his office.

"When we got there, he offered me a cigar and said:

" 'Do you know you've got all Sullivan County wild about you? The cure of that Collins boy yesterday was the most wonderful thing I ever saw.'

"The boy, he said, had some frightful malady—I never could remember the names of those things, and Bowser said he'd as soon think of trying to cure the worst case of leprosy.

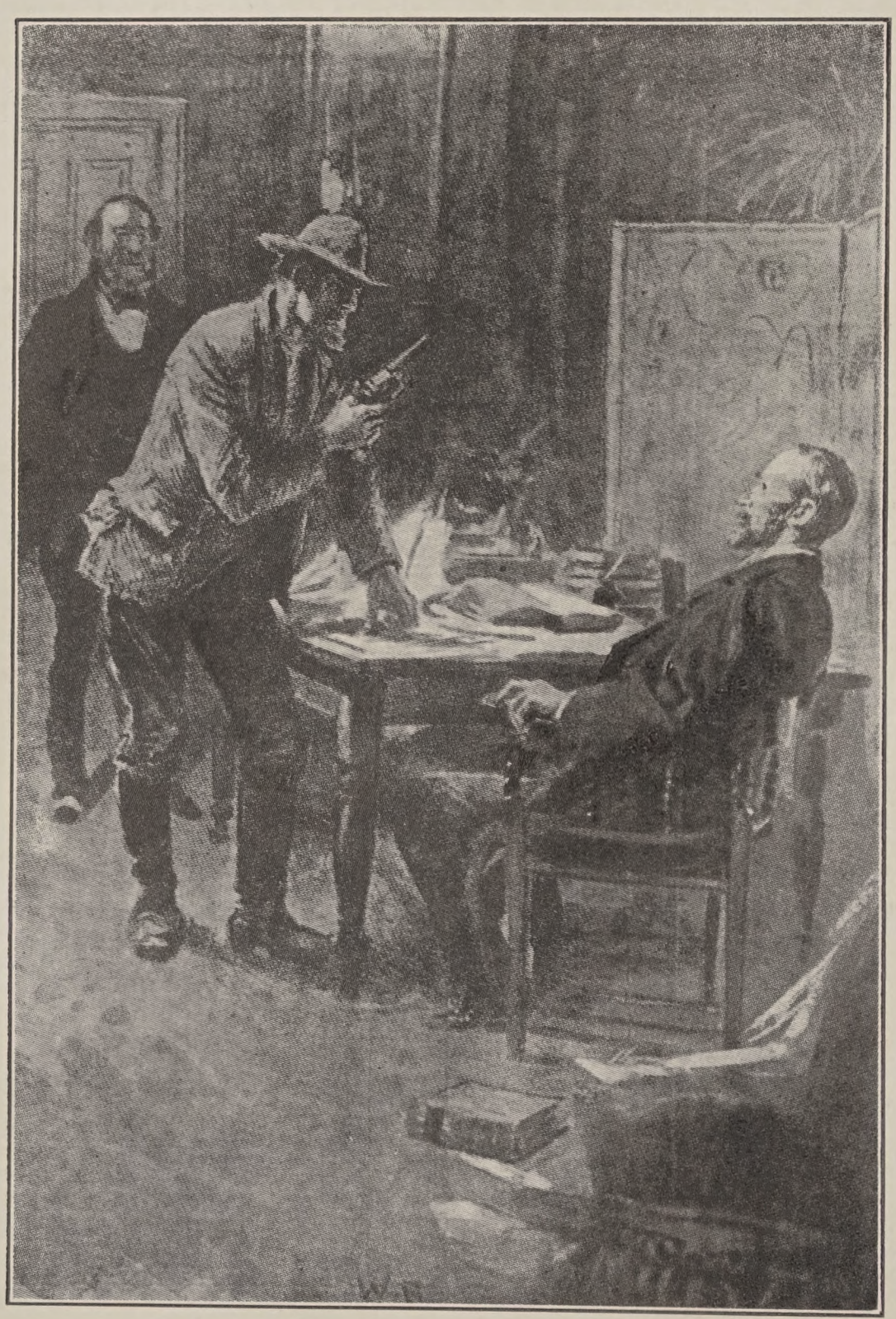
" 'Old man,' he said, 'what is your secret? Haven't any? Why, it's almost supernatural! If I had your power I'd soon be the richest man in the county. I wish you'd go into partnership with me.'

"Again, with deep solemnity of manner, I explained to Bowser that he and his neighbors were mistaken, that I had never studied medicine.

" 'O come now,' he said, with a smile. 'You can't keep that up with me. What is your full name?'

" 'John P. Tadcaster,' I said.

" 'Just so,' answered Dr. Bowser, blithely rising and taking from the mantel a Physicians' Directory. Turning over the leaves he handed the book to me and pointed to a name on one of the pages. Will you believe me? There was the name of John P. Tadcaster, and the information that he graduated



"And Here's a Pistol 'll Blow Your Brains Out"

from the Medical School of the University of Susquehanna in 1884.

" 'So it's of no use,' said Bowser, 'to try to hide the facts any longer,' and he laughed.

"I made up my mind then and there that I should leave Borax at the end of the week. I had supposed that there was not another John P. Tadcaster on the rolling globe, and I knew it would be useless now to try to induce the people of Borax to believe the truth.

"The next day Andrews came up to my room while I was in the midst of hard study and said there was a man downstairs who wanted to see me. I refused to be seen, but in fact the impudent fellow was standing behind Andrews, and he pushed right into the room and shut the door behind him, locking it.

" 'My wife,' he said, 'has blood-pisinin', and I want you to cure her.'

" 'I wish you would go away,' I said angrily. 'Call Dr. Bowser. How dare you come into my room in this manner and tell me what you want?'

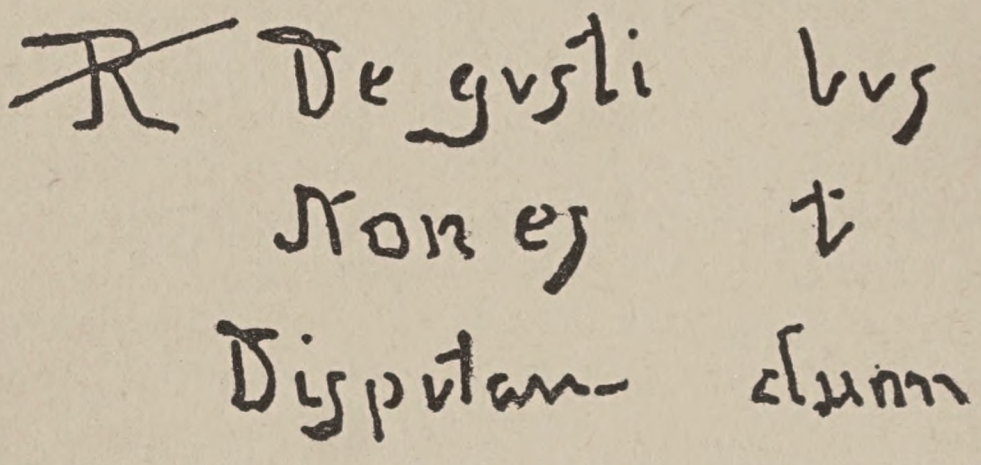
" 'Never mind about no Bowser,' he answered. 'Never mind about him nor no other doctor. My wife's like to die and I'll have you or nobody. I know your tricks and I'm ready for you.'

" 'Tricks,' I said, 'tricks, you villain!'

" 'Well, call 'em what you've a mind to, I don't care. Only I'll stand no foolin'. You write me out a perscription and there's five dollars, and here's a pistol 'll blow your brains out ef you don't do it,' and he actually presented a revolver to my head.

"Consider now, my friend, the situation I was in!

I didn't know if the ruffian was insane. It was hardly an occasion for tranquil reflection. I took up a pen, and first writing a vigorous protest which I proposed to lodge with Andrews lest I should be prosecuted for malpractice, I dashed off the following pretended prescription and handed it to the man:



In other words, *De gustibus non est disputandum.* My handwriting is so crabbed that the thing really looked a little like a prescription. The man took it and laid upon my table five dollars which I crumpled up into a pellet and flung at his head. He went away.

"That night I went over to Perkins's drug store and found the clerk there alone.

" 'Was there a man in here today,' I asked, 'with a prescription written by me?'

" 'Yes, doctor,' he said.

" 'What did you do with it?'

" 'Filled it, of course.'

" 'Filled it! You didn't try to fill it, did you?'

" 'Why, certainly,' said the youth, smiling. 'That's what prescriptions are for, isn't it?'

"I sat down upon the chair by the soda-fountain. I felt faint.

"'Were there any poisons in the medicine?' I asked.

"'You ought to know,' he said. 'Two or three, I think; but not enough to kill. But, anyhow, what's the odds? Mrs. McGuire is well.'

"'What Mrs. McGuire?'

"'The woman you wrote the prescription for. She is going to a picnic in the morning. Says she never felt so well in her life. McGuire says you're the doctor for his money's long's you stay here.'

"Well, I went back to my studies hoping that I had heard the last of this nonsense; but I might have known better. Really it is wonderful how swiftly rumor flies in a country like that, where there are no newspapers to carry information. Within a week invalids flocked to Borax in such numbers that two more stages were put upon the line and Andrews hadn't a vacant room in his house. He began to draw plans for a new wing, and I could not move from my room without being solicited to perform a cure.

"One scoundrel, from Purgatory Springs, hobbled about after me on crutches and insisted upon telling me that he had been crippled for twenty years and had taken tons of medicine. I evaded him for several days; but one morning he caught me as I went into the office for my mail and he asked me if I wouldn't just put my hand on his lame leg above the knee. I was born good-natured, and like a fool I granted his request. A moment later he gave a

howl of delight, tossed his crutches over in the corner and began to caper about the room. Then he projected himself at me with a manifest purpose to embrace me, but I dodged him, flew upstairs, and locked myself in my room.

"Do you suppose that man had really been lame? I don't know. I doubt it. I had my suspicions of Andrews at the time, but how could I prove anything?

"However, I made up my mind to leave Borax, and I notified Andrews to retain a seat in the stage for me on the following Saturday. But he did not do it. I could never find out exactly how the thing was worked, but you could see with your own eyes three stages arrive at Borax every afternoon and nobody ever saw one go away. Conspiracy, you say? Very likely. And so I sent out and tried to hire a wagon to take me away, but there was not a man in the neighborhood who would consent to perform the service for me.

"I resolved that I would leave if I had to walk, but I did dislike to make the journey on foot, over bad mountain roads, and then I could not bring myself easily to consent to abandon my trunk.

"That woman Collins and her boy still remained at the hotel, and Mrs. Collins used to look at me in a most trying manner while we sat at the table in the dining-room. I couldn't make her out for a while. She looked stupid, but for all I could tell she might develop low cunning. Anyhow, I merely nodded to her as we passed, treating her with coldness; perhaps with disdain.

"On the Saturday I had arranged to leave Borax, I was sitting in my room trying to learn a Spanish vocabulary, when I heard a woman's screams. For a moment I was startled, but I have presence of mind, so I checked my curiosity and merely locked the door.

"For an hour or more there was hubbub and excitement downstairs, but I remained calm. Then there was a knock upon the door. I did not answer. Then I heard Doctor Bowser's voice calling me. I unlocked the door and opened it a crack.

" 'Busy, are you?' asked Bowser.

" 'Yes, very busy. What's the matter?'

" 'Oh, nothing; nothing much. Only I thought you might care to know that poor little Geordie Collins has passed away.'

" 'Dead?'

" 'Dead. He dropped right over out by the pump just after eating some damson plums, and life was extinct before I could get to him.'

" 'Is the boy really dead?' I asked.

"Absolutely and conclusively dead,' said Bowser solemnly and with strong emphasis. 'I think I ought to know when a boy is dead, oughtn't I? I'm no great doctor like you, but I'm not just a mere chump. I tell you the boy breathed his last at 8.34 this very morning.'

"I am sure that I am not a cruel man, nor a hard-hearted man, I am not even ungenerous; but (I am half ashamed to tell it) a feeling of deep, pure joy thrilled my soul when I learned that Geordie was beyond my reach. Under the circumstances it

would have been indecent, would it not, in spite of my repugnance for his mother, if I had refrained from every manifestation of feeling? I went downstairs with Bowser, who seemed to be crying. Do I doubt that he was crying? I can hardly tell. But, anyhow, there in the parlor lay poor Geordie, cold and white and still, on the red cushion of the settee, and Mrs. Collins knelt beside him, moaning and weeping and wringing her hands. All the invalids of the hotel were in the room or at the door, and three-quarters of the people of Borax were in the office or on the porch or looking in at the windows.

"I had a shiver of apprehension as I came into the room; but what can you do with a boy that has had his vital spark completely quenched? I went up to the sofa, and looked down upon the calm, still face, white as marble, and then I felt sorry I had had such wicked feelings about the child. My heart began to ache for the mother too. I said to her that she must try to bear up and be patient; that Geordie was happier now than if he were with us; and that he wouldn't be willing to come back to us if he could.

"Then I took the boy's hand in mine and leaned over him to kiss him.

"Imagine my feelings as I saw his eyes open! Then he sneezed twice, sat straight up on the red cushion, said, 'Where's Ma?' and then flung his arms about his mother's neck.

"What would you have thought of that, my friend? Was the boy cataleptic, or had his scandalous old mother mesmerized him, or was Geordie

just up to some kind of game with me, or had Bowser drugged him? I can't tell. But, no matter; there was Geordie, risen right from the dead, everybody thought, and the people—well, I know you won't expect me even to try to tell of the excitement that ensued. Borax was just crazy; and I felt the iron fingers of Fate closing around me. I knew I should never get away from that disgusting town unless by stealth. I was hardly safe in my room; but the locked door did protect me for a time.

"Food, however, is a necessity. I would not go down to dinner. I rang for it to be brought to me. Andrews brought it himself, and after depositing the tray upon the table and looking out of my window to see how the new wing would fit to the north end of the hotel, he said:

" 'Doc, I have an offer for you.'

" 'Andrews,' I said, 'please withdraw. I am not open to offers.'

" 'But you wouldn't be impolite to a lady, would you? You're not that kind of a man, unless I'm wrong in my calc'lations.'

" 'To what lady do you refer?'

" 'To the Widder Collins, little Geordie's ma. She has designated me to say to you that she has two good farms over in Loyalsock township, five hundred dollars in bank and a first mortgage on the new Methodist Church at Huckleberry Bend, and ef you are willin' to marry her, she's willin' and so's Geordie.'

"My friend, could you, without reflection, have framed a reply to such an extraordinary proposition?

I couldn't, and so the delay gave Andrews time to remark:

" 'Ef you don't mind marryin' a widder I'd advise you to take that offer. She's a woman that's calc'lated to make home happy.'

"The time had now come for action. I must fly. But how? I sat up most of the night, meditating upon a plan of escape, and before morning dawned I thought I had one prepared. I had resolved to bribe one of the stage-drivers to take me away while Borax slept.

"But a better chance presented itself that very day. Dr. Bowser came over to see me about nine o'clock, and when he had made himself at home in the rocking-chair in my room, he cleared his throat a couple of times, and looking timidly at me, he said:

" 'Things are not even in this world, are they?'

"I was not willing to commit myself until I could find out what he was after, so I did not answer.

" 'A country doctor,' he continued, 'has a hard life, driving here and there, miles and miles, up hill and down dale, night and day, and half the time getting no pay or taking his pay in poultry and horse-feed. And yet here other people just have money chucked at them—fairly chucked at them, by Fortune.'

" 'Bowser,' I asked, 'what are you driving at?'

" 'Oh, well,' he said gloomily, 'it's no use of talking to you, of course; but while I can hardly get bread, no matter how much I try, and no matter if I work myself to death, here's big money lying

right in your hands and you won't even take the trouble to shut your fingers over it.'

"'Dr. Bowser,' I said sternly, 'I've told you over and over again that I am not a physician and that it would be wicked, simply a bare-faced fraud, for me to permit these foolish people about here to think me one.'

"He looked at me wearily, his face plainly indicating that he still did not believe me; then he said:

"'Doctor or no doctor, nobody can deny that I am a doctor. I'll tell you what I'll do. You agree to work with me, and let me attend to the scientific end, while you just stand by and look on, and I'll give you two thirds of the receipts, and I'll get rich on the other third.'

"I was about to refuse this proposition upon the ground that I could not consent to become a party to a dishonorable arrangement, when he continued:

"'I've got a patient, old Mrs. Brown, over here at Scipio, who will die sure under my treatment. She's rich, too, and if we could cure her——'

"I saw at once that if I could reach Scipio in Bowser's carriage, I should have a chance to get away.

"'I will visit Mrs. Brown with you,' I said.

"'You will!' shouted Bowser, jumping up with such violence that he upset the rocking chair. 'Hooray! Doctor, I knew your heart was right. When shall we go?'

"'Now,' I said.

"He went out to get his horse. I put into an envelope that I placed upon the table the sum that

I owed Andrews for board; then I packed as much of my clothing as I could get into a hand-bag, and sat down to wait for Bowser.

"We went downstairs together, and as we passed through the office Andrews looked at me and my valise suspiciously. But Bowser explained the matter to him and he seemed much relieved. Looking around as I took my seat in the buggy I saw Mrs. Collins waving her handkerchief at me from the parlor window, while Geordie tried to climb one of the posts of the porch. I never saw a boy of his years who presented a more vigorous appearance.

"We reached Scipio at half-past eleven o'clock, and Bowser tied his horse in front of Mrs. Brown's house. J. Manderson Brown, her son, opened the door for us. He looked grave. Bowser introduced me, and Mr. Brown said in a low voice, as his countenance overspread with hopefulness:

" 'Thank you, sir; I have heard much of you.'

"Of course, as you may imagine, I couldn't do an earthly thing for poor Mrs. Brown, but Bowser insisted that I must act as if I were treating her; so I gave her nine drops of paregoric in sugar and water, and left sixteen quinine pills with directions that she should take one every four hours.

"The dear old lady looked gratefully at me as I stood by her bed-side, and when I bade her good-bye she told me she felt better already. Bowser said to young Brown, downstairs, that he thought now the promise was distinct for recovery.

"But how should I contrive to get away from Bowser? I asked him if he would mind driving

about a little bit so that I could see the town, and he said he would be glad to show Scipio to me. We drove and drove until at last I saw a drug store, and, as good fortune would have it, the store was right across the street from the railway station.

"I asked Bowser to hitch his horse while I bought some medicine. We spent an hour in the drug store, but no train came, and Bowser at last proposed to start for home. I thought I heard a train coming, and I went to the front door; but it was a freight train and it did not stop. Then I actually saw a passenger train approaching from the opposite direction, and I asked Bowser if he would mind going around to the grocery store and getting some crackers for me, while I looked up something in the Pharmacopœia that lay upon the druggist's counter.

"Bowser went upon the errand, and no sooner had he turned the corner than I went out, took my valise from the buggy, dashed over to the station and entered a car. The train started at once, and I felt half-ashamed of myself as I looked through the window and saw poor old Bowser slowly coming back to the drug store with the bundle of crackers in his hand and his head bent downward. No doubt he was thinking how rich he would be by that time next year. But you can't blame me, can you, for running away somehow or other?

"You would naturally think that would be the end of my story; but it isn't. Just six months afterwards I was sitting in my library at home when the servant brought me a card. It had on it the name

'J. Manderson Brown.' I was really scared. But the man had run me down. I couldn't get away. And was I to be bluffed and bull-dozed in my own house? No sir! So I went down into the parlor to see him. To my astonishment he greeted me warmly, clasping my hand and even manifesting some emotion.

"'Doctor,' he said as he resumed his seat upon the sofa, 'I owe you more than I can ever hope to tell you.'

"'Your mother, then, fully recovered?'

"'Poor mother is dead.'

"'I am very sorry!" I said, 'but what then is the——?'

"'I will explain. Your medicine acted like magic. Her system responded instantly to your treatment, and in less than a week she was about the house and as well as she had ever been. In fact, better; she really seemed to have renewed her youth. She ascribed it all to you, and words cannot convey a notion of her gratitude. She longed to see you and tell you what her feeling for you was. But, alas, three or four months later another malady assailed her, and as you had disappeared in a mysterious manner, leaving no traces of your whereabouts, she did not have proper treatment from that man Bowser, and so she died.

"'You wrong poor Bowser,' I said.

"'No, he means well, but he is dull; while you! Oh, well, you simply have genius, wonderful, wonderful genius!

"'And now,' continued Brown, 'my mother was

a woman whose gratitude never expressed itself in barren language. She re-wrote her will after her life was saved by you and she left you twenty thousand dollars. I have it with me, here,' and Brown presented a swollen wallet.

"'I won't take a dollar of it,' I said calmly.

"'What?' he exclaimed, as the blood flushed his face.

"'I should be a swindler if I took your mother's money,' I said. 'I am no physician and I never did her a particle of good. It was all humbug.'

"The man seemed stunned for a moment. Then he got up and walked about. Resuming his seat, he said:

"'You must take this money.'

"'I won't do it.'

"'I heard that you were queer,' he said, 'and that you would insist that you are no doctor, and as I never met a man of that kind before I just give up trying to understand you; but there's one thing I can understand,' and he shook the wallet angrily at me. 'Yes, sir, I can understand one thing, and that is you can't insult the memory of my dead mother!'

"'Far, far be it from me, Mr. Brown,' I said, 'to think of such a thing.'

"'Very well, then,' he exclaimed, 'you take the legacy; her dying request almost was that I should put the money into your hands. Now you take it or there's going to be trouble.'

"'What kind of trouble?' I asked.

"'Why,' he said, 'I'll prosecute you. I'm under

bonds as the executor of my mother's estate to see to it that her wishes are fulfilled, and I'm going to do my duty, no matter who has to suffer.'

"'But,' I said, 'you can't punish a man for refusing to accept money. You can't put him into prison for such a thing as that.'

"'Yes, you can,' answered Brown. 'It is felony. I knew of a man once in New Jersey who was sent to jail for ten years because he wouldn't take a legacy left him by his aunt. I'd have made it twenty years.'

"'That seems a little bit hard, too, doesn't it?' I suggested.

"'Not hard,' responded Brown sternly, 'when a man sets himself up to say what another person shall do with her money and tries to block the wheels of justice. Not at all hard. But I don't want to resort to extreme measures. I'd hate to have you hauled into court. I ask you to take this money as a favor to my sainted mother.'

"What would you have done, sir, under such perplexing circumstances? I consented to take the money on condition that in signing a receipt I should protest in writing that I am no doctor and that I accepted the bequest under compulsion. Brown was satisfied, and when our business was ended he shook hands with me and left.

"I could not feel sure that I should ever find peace and an uninterrupted opportunity to study the Spanish language so long as I remained at home. I determined to go to Europe and to hide myself somewhere amid the mountains of Switzerland for a few years. I thank you for listening to me. It has

lightened my burden to tell you the story of the persecution I have endured."

Tadcaster and I arose, and together we passed out of the parlor. As we did so, I saw the deck-steward point him out to Dr. Mullen, the ship's surgeon, who seemed to have been inquiring for Tadcaster. A smile overspread Mullen's countenance as, with both hands extended, he stepped briskly forward and greeting my companion, said:

"Have I the honor to address the great Doctor Tadcaster?"

Tadcaster did not hesitate. He plunged into his state-room and closed the door.

I never saw him again; unless he was the man with a clean-shaven face and a slouched hat over his eyes whom I saw at Liverpool, dressed in shabby clothes, creeping out of the ship over the steerage passengers' gangway. The man was built like Tadcaster, but it may have been some other person.

I am going to Borax some day to look up the facts for myself. I feel that this story will not have a satisfying conclusion unless I can report that Dr. Bowser has married the widow Collins and adopted Geordie.

## IV

## FRICTIONAL ELECTRICITY

I HAPPENED to visit the accident ward of the Charity Hospital at Norristown because a friend of mine who is interested in the Flower Mission asked me to stop there during my afternoon walk and give a few flowers to the sufferers.

When I had arranged the last half-dozen of the roses in a vase upon the little stand by the bedside of one bruised and battered patient, he looked at me gratefully and said:

"Oh, thank you, sir! Thank you so much! And would you mind, sir, stopping for a bit of talk. I'm so lonely and miserable?"

I sat upon the chair by the bed and with my hand smoothed the counterpane, while the patient asked me:

"Do I really look like a burglar, sir, do you think?"

I hesitated to reply, as I examined his face. It was nearly covered with bandages, but his nose seemed swollen and there were bruises about both eyes.

"I don't wonder you don't like to speak your mind when you see me here a broken wreck, smashed all up and not looking a bit like myself, sir. But if you would see me well and strong and all fixed up for going to church you'd say right off that I don't favor no burglar in looks."

I asked the unfortunate man his name.

"Mordecai Barnes, sir, and I'm a journeyman plumber, sir, with a good character and don't take no second place in that business with no man. How did I get here? What banged me all up into a shame and a disgrace like this? Well, I'll tell you, sir, if you have the patience to listen, for it does me good to talk who has been used so hard and can get no attention from the nurses or nobody in this here asylum.

"Do you understand about frictional electricity, sir? No? I thought not; and well had it been for me, for this shattered hulk that you see a-lying here, if I had never heard of it neither! I'll tell you how it was, sir. My mate, George Watkins—and there ain't no better man nowheres, if you go clear 'round the globe—George Watkins is one of these men with inquiring minds always a-hungering for knowledge, and so George off he goes week after week to the lectures at the Huxley Institute. You know it; in that yaller building over by Nonpareil Square. And George often he tells me about the wonderful things he learned there, and among others he was fond of explaining to me about frictional electricity.

"It seems, sir, for you may not know it any more'n I knowed it ontil George explained it to me, that there's three different kinds of electricity. There's the kind you make with the steam engine, and the kind you make with acid, and the kind you make with friction. Well, sir, would you believe—or, let me say first, have you ever rubbed a black cat on the back in a dark room and seen the sparks fly? Of course, and, sir, I know it's almost beyond belief,

but positive, they told George Watkins, my mate, up at the Huxley Institute that them sparks and the aurora borealis that you see sometimes a-lighting up the heavens is one and the same thing! Wonderful, isn't it, sir, that science should discover that a black cat is some kind of kin to the aurora borealis? But George says that's what they said, for the aurora borealis is caused by the earth a-rolling around and rubbing the air just as the sparks is caused by stroking the cat's back and making frictional electricity.

"And George, he says to me that this here frictional electricity is the only kind that's any use for curing pain. The steam-engine kind won't do it, and the acid kind won't do it, but the frictional kind'll do it every time if you only know how to apply it.

"Well, sir, now I pass to the sorrerful part of my story. There is a girl named Bella Dougherty that does housework for a man named Muffitt, and a mighty nice girl she is; or, I used to think her nice. Maybe you know where Mr. Muffitt lives, on Thirteenth Avenue just above Parry Street, in Connock, the third house on the left with white shutters.

"Anyhow, I got to be fond of Bella and often used to set and talk with her in the evenings in Mr. Muffitt's kitchen and maybe have two or three other girls come in sometimes, with a few men; though I never cared, sir, for much flocking together at such times, for Bella Dougherty, she was good enough for me, just her and I by ourselves.

"Howsomedever, there was another man who had a kind of fancy for Bella Dougherty, although in my

opinion he isn't fit to wipe her feet on, and his name is William Jones.

"This yer William Jones used to come intruding around there in Mr. Muffitt's kitchen when he wasn't wanted and when he seen that me and Bella Dougherty would ruther be a setting there by ourselves. And so, sir, one night, just to kill time till he'd quit and go, I begun to tell them what George Watkins said to me about the Huxley Institute and frictional electricity being a sure cure for pain.

"And William Jones, a-winking at Bella Dougherty as much as to say, sir, that he'd be having the laugh on me, said he had a pain that minute in his head from neuralgia and he'd bet me a quarter no frictional electricity would drive it out. I know now what was the matter with the head of William Jones. Not neuralgia nor nothing of the sort, sir. It was vacuum. My mate, George Watkins, tells me that at the Institute they say that vacuum always produces pain, and that was the only thing the matter with this William Jones I'm a-telling you about.

"I never take no dare, not from no man of that kind, anyways, sir; so I bet him a quarter I'd cure him, and cure him with frictional electricity, too. So he set down on the chair a-laughing and a-winking at Bella Dougherty, who set over by the range holding the quarters, and I begun to rub William Jones's eyebrows with my two thumbs, just gently, but right along, just like stroking a cat; keeping it up, a-rubbing and a-rubbing until at last I asked him how he felt now, and can you imagine my supprise, sir, when I seen that William Jones was fast asleep!

I was skeered at first, but in a minute I seen that I had hypnertized him unbeknown to myself, and there set William Jones 's if he was froze stiff.

"I wa'n't so very sorry, sir, when I found out how things was a-going, although if I could have seen what was the consequences of this strange occurrence I'd 'a' seized my hat and bid Bella Dougherty good-bye and started straight for home.

"But, sir, of course, I acted like a fool, for I'd read in the papers how a man who hypnertizes another man can make him believe anything and do anything, so I thought I'd have some fun with William Jones and enjoy a lovely quiet evening with Bella Dougherty.

"So I said to William Jones, 'Now, William, you are a little school-scholar oncet again and you've missed your lesson and so you just go over there in that corner by the china-closet and stand with your face to the wall and say over and over your multiplication table till you know it right.' And so to the supprise of Bella Dougherty, William Jones went right over in the corner, like I told him, and there he stood saying, 'Six sixes is thirty-six, six sevens is forty-two,' and so on, whilst I set over with Bella Dougherty peacefully enjoying ourselves just exactly 's if William Jones wasn't anywhere's about.

"And so, sir, it went on until Mrs. Muffitt she came down and said to Bella Dougherty it was time to shut the house up and then I bid her good-night and told William to go home and go straight to bed, which he did, and a-saying the multiplication table all the way down the street. He would have said

it all night, sir, I do believe, if I had not ordered him to stop and to begin saying his prayers when I passed him in at his front door.

"You may believe me, sir, that I had William Jones on my mind all night and was a-worrying a little about him, too, for fear he'd never come to. So around I goes the first thing in the morning to his boarding-house and his landlady tells me he had been a-saying his prayers all mixed up like with the multiplication table ever since he came home the night before. She was a bit troubled about it, sir, as you may imagine, for William Jones was a good boarder and it'd 'a' been money out of her pocket if he had lost his mind.

"So then I seen William Jones and knowed at oncet that the hypnertizing still had hold of him. Very well; I had no idea how to get him out of it, and it didn't hurt him nohow, so I just commanded William Jones to drop the multiplication table and his prayers and to fix all his intellect in the regular way on plumbing; and William Jones at oncet calmed down and seemed his old self agin.

"Then a wicked thought flashed into my mind. You know how it is yourself, sir; you are tempted and you are weak and you fall, and then the first thing you know to be sure your sin'll find you out and there you are; here *I* am, a shattered hulk. It suddenly occurred to me, sir, that if I could control William Jones, why not turn his affections away from Bella Dougherty, who might take a fancy to him, who knows?—women are so queer—and direct his thoughts towards my own Aunt Maggie, who is a

middle-aged widder and not so bad looking, and far too good for sech a man as William Jones, although to speak the plain truth I had no objections to having him for an uncle by marriage.

"Therefore I did so, sir, and before the week was out I heard that William Jones was plumbing in the most supprising manner, plumbing here and plumbing there, and paying attentions vigorously, so to speak, to Aunt Maggie every evening.

"In the meantime, sir, believe me, I did not lose time in my suit with Bella Dougherty, who seemed real mad at William Jones when people began to talk about his courting Aunt Maggie, so that in less than two weeks, when Bella Dougherty heard that William Jones and Aunt Maggie had about agreed to marry, I got Bella Dougherty as good as to say, although she never quite said it square, that she would have me.

"I never knowed how it happened, sir, whether somebody waked William Jones up, or he just come to by himself, but, sir, anyhow, William Jones about that time dropped hypnertism and was himself agin. Imagine, sir, how things stood! There never was a man as mad as William Jones, mad with me and mad with Aunt Maggie, to whom he sent a cruel message that he wa'n't marrying no grandmas, and that made Aunt Maggie mad; and then William Jones set down and wrote me a letter to the general effect that whenever he met me my course in this life would be short.

"Naturally, sir, as you may believe, I kept out of William Jones's way, for I am a quiet man, not

fond of quarreling, and besides William Jones is forty pounds heavier, sir, than I am.

"But one night while I was a-setting in the kitchen at Mr. Muffitt's, having some uplifting conversation with Bella Dougherty, there was a sudden knock on the back door, and up she jumps, pale and skeered, and says: 'I do believe that is William Jones. He said he might maybe call this evening.' So, of course, as I never hunt trouble, I raised the window-sash over by the kitchen table at the back and went out just as William Jones came in at the side door. He kept the door open a-watching for me, and so as I couldn't get to the gate in the yard, I climbed quickly over the high fence into the next yard.

"I ought to have gone right home, sir, without stopping, but I hated to leave William Jones there with Bella Dougherty, and me just driven out; so, as it was raining hard and I had on my Sunday suit, what does I do but try the latch on the kitchen door of the house next door to Mr. Muffitt's and, finding the door opened, in I walked and set down in a chair to await what was a-going to happen. That was a bad job for me, sir. It isn't safe to take one false step.

"For the next minute the inside door from the dining-room springs open and a man jumps out and grabs me and says, 'I've got thee at last, have I?' He was a Quaker, sir; a big man and with a grip like iron. I never knowed a man with a grip like that. Did you ever, sir, have your fingers in the crack of a door and somebody a-leaning hard on the door? That was the way this Quaker held me.

Then he calls out, 'Amelia! Amelia!' and in a minute a sweet old Quaker lady comes out with a candle, and he says to her, I've caught that burglar, Amelia; thee get the clothes line.'

"So the lady she gets the clothes line and that man he ties my hands and my arms behind my back, good and tight, and then he made me set down and he ties me to the chair, and at last he give the rope two or three turns around the leg of the kitchen table and says to me, 'Friend, thee can just set there while I go to get an officer.' Gave me no chance to explain! Took it all for granted; whereas if he would a-listened to me I could have cleared up the whole mystery in two minutes.

"So then, sir, out he goes for a policeman, and the old lady sets down in a chair not far from me and said she was sorry I was so wicked and asked me about my mother, and if I ever went to First-Day School, and a whole lot of things. Then a thought seemed to strike her and she went into the next room and came back with a book in her hand, and she said she would read a good book to me while we waited for justice to take its course.

"She was lovely to look at, sir, with her tidy brown frock and the crêpe handkerchief folded acrost her bosom, and her cap, and the smile on her face. A sweet face, sir; an angel face; yes, sir; but sweet faces often has cruel dispositions behind them. For then she told me that the book was called Barclay's Apology for the people called Quakers, or something like that, and she begun to read it to me.

"Have you ever read that book, sir? It is dedi-

cated, I think, to Charles the Second, and it begins with Fifteen Propositions and she read every one of them propositions from first to last. Then she turned to the section, sir, about Salutations and Recreations, and she read and read and read until, sir, actually it made my head swim.

"Do you know, sir, is Barclay still alive—the man who wrote that book? Is there no way of ever getting even with him?

"I couldn't get away. I might have walked out somehow with the chair fastened to me, but I couldn't go, could I, sir? with the table tied to my leg, and particularly if I had to climb the fence? So I had to set there and be regarded as a burglar.

"But at last I *would be* heard, and I told her I was no burglar, but an innercent man; and then she looked in the index to find if Barclay had anything interesting to say about the wickedness of telling falsehoods. And then I said I was a member of the Baptist Society and she said at once she would read Barclay on the errors of that sect, but I insisted on being heard and I explained to her that I got into this trouble by trying to cure William Jones by frictional electricity, and she said, 'Thee has an ingenious and fruitful mind to invent such a story. Oh, that it had been turned to better devices than following a life of evil.'

" 'And it seems hard, too,' I said 'that a perfectly respectable Baptist plumber should be arrested as a burglar simply because he tried to relieve the pain of William Jones by a scientific method invented by the Huxley Institute.'

" 'Where is thy friend, William Jones?' she asked.

"Do you know, sir, at that very moment you could hear through the partition, William Jones and Bella Dougherty laughing next door? It seemed like mockery to me, a-setting there in chains, so to speak.

" 'He is next door, ma'm,' I said, 'a-courting the hired girl.'

" 'I will prove if thee is telling the truth,' she said, and she got up and moved towards the door.

" 'No, ma'm, no,' I said. 'Please don't do that. William mustn't know that I am here.' And so she came back and set down again and picked up Barclay, and looked sorrerful at me and said:

" 'It is wicked for thee to have such vain imaginations. Why does thee persist in pretending that there is a William Jones?' And then she started to look through Barclay to find if he had anything that would fit the William Jones part of the case.

"What could I do? I daresn't call in William Jones to prove my innercence; he was mad all over at me and a bigger man too, and here I was tied; and I couldn't call Bella Dougherty without William Jones knowing it. It was hard, sir, for a man as innercent as a little babe to set there with that sweet and smooth old lady considering him a shameless story-teller and firing Barclay at him, now wasn't it, sir? Would you have called William Jones, sir, under them there circumstances, and his laughter and Bella Dougherty's still a-resounding through the partition?

"Well, sir, that policeman was a long time a-coming with the old Quaker. I never knowed why, but Friend

Amelia she set down agin and turned over the leaves of Barclay and begun oncet more to read about Salutations and Recreations while, strange as it may seem to you, sir, I felt that I'd ruther see the policeman and be locked up in the dungeon than to hear more of it.

"But, howsomdever, after a while in comes the Quaker and the officer with him and the very first minute the officer seen me he says, 'I reckernize him as an old offender.' 'No, you don't,' says I, 'I'm no old offender nor a young offender. I'm a perfeckly honest Baptist plumber and I kin prove it, too.' 'How kin you prove it?' says the officer. 'By William Jones,' says I, 'who is a-setting in that kitchen right next door a-wooing the hired girl.'

"I was bold about it, sir, because I knowed William Jones daresn't strike at me while the officer was there.

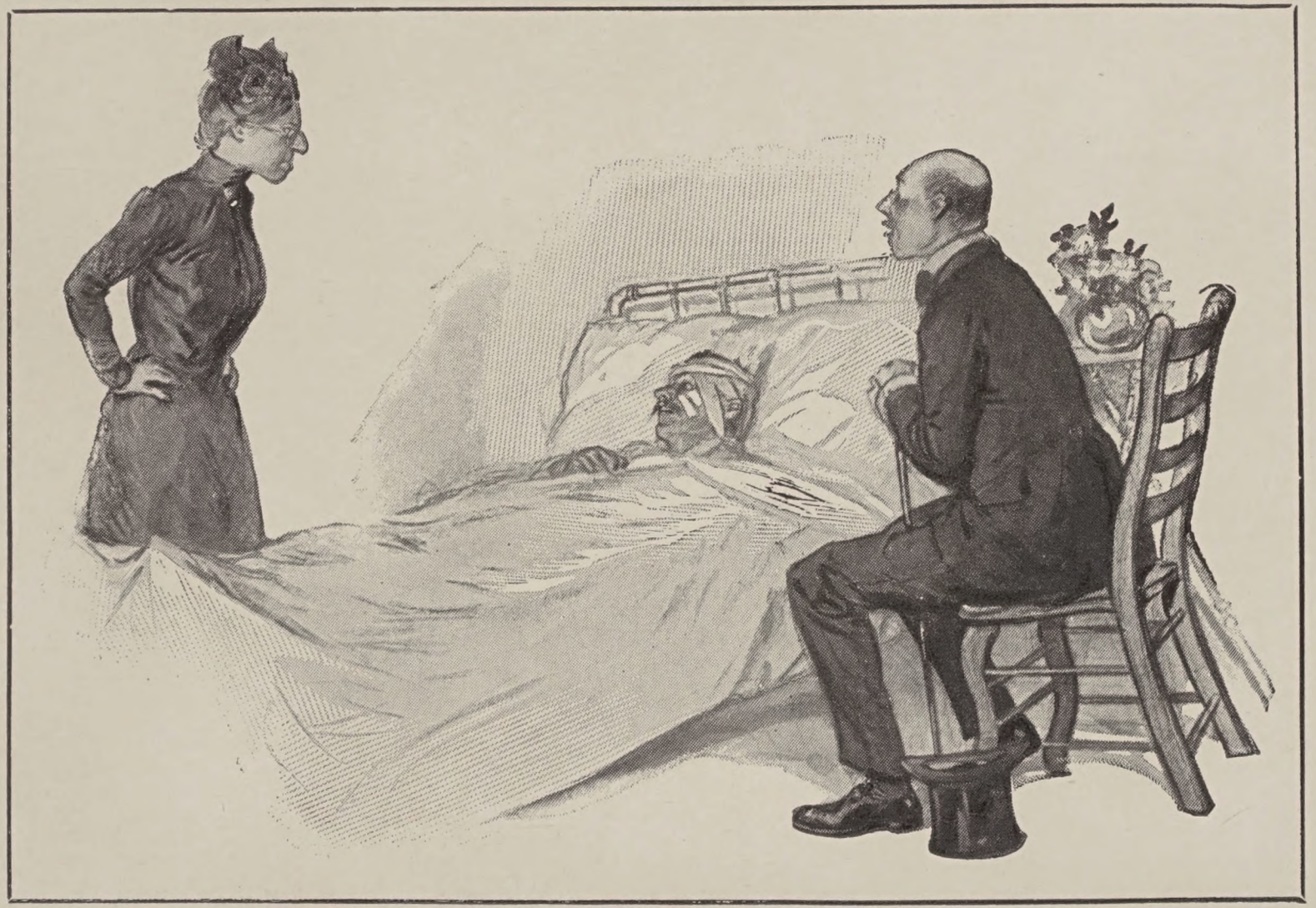
" 'We'll see about that,' says the officer, and in he goes to Mr. Muffitt's yard next door and comes back with William Jones. I have no use for a man like William Jones. What do you think he does, sir? Why he looks me over from head to foot in a blank sort of a way and then, turning to the policeman, he says, 'I don't know the man, officer; never seen him before;' then that low-down plumber walks out and leaves me there and goes back and in a minute I hear him and Bella Dougherty a-laughing worse than ever.

" 'I thought not,' says the officer, slipping the handcuffs on me. 'And so now you come right along.' And Friend Amelia looked mournful at me and says

to me she would come around and read Barclay regular to me in my cell after I was convicted.

"And so, sir, to make a long story short, I was took up before the magistrate and held for burglary and my mate, George Watkins, that owns his own house, went my bail and so I was let go.

"I might stop here, sir, but I must tell you that the follering Thursday I met William Jones up a kind of blind alley where I was working, while he was working in a house on the opposite side. He had me in a corner where there was no chance to run, so I put on a bold face and went right up to him and says I, 'William, there's been some difference betwixt us, but I'm not the man to bear grudges and I forgive you.' 'What's that?' says he, savage. 'Why,' says I, 'the whole thing is just one of them unpleasant misunderstandings,' and then I started to explain to him about the Huxley Institute theory of frictional electricity and the aurora borealis. I can't tell you what he said, sir, in reply, with reference to the aurora borealis, because I'm a decent man and never use no low language; but suddenly he jumped on me, and the first thing I knowed I was being lifted in the ambulance and fetched to this yer hospital. Was it right, sir, do you think, for William Jones to strike me foul like that while I was trying to state my case to him? No, sir. But that's not the worst of it. Last Tuesday word came to me that Bella Dougherty had throwed me over and is going to marry William Jones on Decoration Day! Think of that, sir!" and Mordecai Barnes turned his head upon his pillow and moaned.



"Is That You, Mordecai Barnes?"

Turning again towards me, he was about to resume his statement when suddenly he exclaimed, "Why, there's Aunt Maggie!"

A woman of fifty years, nicely clad, came to the bedside and said to him coldly:

"Is that you, Mordecai Barnes?"

"Yes, Aunt Maggie."

"I'm ashamed of you, Mordecai Barnes," said she, "ashamed of you. It served you right. You got just what was a-comin' to you. I wish William had banged you worse."

"And more than that," continued Aunt Maggie, glaring at him through her spectacles, "I've torn up my old will which named you my sole heir and made a new one and left all my property to this yer very hospital."

With these words Aunt Maggie walked away and left the room.

Mordecai Barnes could not speak for a few moments. He looked as if death would be welcome. Then, pulling the bedclothes up under his chin and closing his eyes wearily, he said:

"Curse the day, say I, when George Watkins first went to the Huxley Institute and heard about frictional electricity!"

## V

## THE RALLY AT THE FORGE

I DROVE out from Connock on the Radnor Road one morning with the rural mail-carrier and presently we came to the crossing by the Gulf Church, where the highway from Merion sweeps downward towards the great gap in the hills and runs out towards Valley Forge.

At the turn of the road by the church-corner the bank on which the structure stands thrusts out from the tower so that on the way up from Connock you see the mound and the sentinel-tree upon it almost before you perceive the church.

As we turned to the right, around this little headland jutted upon the highway, the carrier, Thomas Brant, a devout, serious man, and not, one would think, likely to indulge in freaks of imagination, waved the back of his hand at the mound and said:

"I saw a great sight there once; a great sight. You don't believe that the other world laps over into this one, do you? Laps over! Why it is here; right here! When you put out your hand you touch it. The folks that I flock with would laugh at me if I told them that. But they have no doubts when the minister in this very church here reads, as I have heard him do many a time, about Elisha at Dothan. You remember that Elisha prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened, and lo! the mountains

around and about were full of the armies of the Lord! Now, tell me, if that is the truth, why may not the Lord give his servants a vision of the hidden hosts in our time? They have not disbanded, have they, do you think?

"And where might the Lord open a man's eyes to see such a sight if not among these hills, and along this very road, where his people with bleeding feet in the far-off time marched to the Forge and to sacrifice and death?

"Well, sir, if you will believe me, something like that once happened to me and if you have patience to listen I will tell you of an experience I never dared to speak of to the dull-minded people whom I meet with in Connock.

"I belong to a family of fighters, peace man as I am. They were warriors—the Brants; gentle and quiet and good-natured men, too. But fighters when the cause was just. It was in the blood of them. I have heard my father—that was Jasper Brant, the color sergeant, wounded at Cold Harbor—say that the sight of the flag fluttering in the wind made him thrill and tingle to his finger-ends.

"His father and his own son Alan, my youngest brother, were soldiers in the field. Owen, that is my grandfather, was a corporal in Wayne's brigade in the Revolution when he was sixteen. He died in 1840. My father, Jasper, was color sergeant in the Civil War at forty-five, and Alan, hardly more than a boy, would go to the Spanish War and he perished on the field at San Juan, July, 1898.

"Father carried an open wound in his ankle that

lamed him for nigh on to forty years. He was proud of his father's record and prouder of his son, Second Sergeant Alan, though he mourned bitterly for him. As the time went on and he knew the call for him could not be far off, it seemed to me he got to longing for death so that he might again see the Second Sergeant and the Corporal, his father.

"The other world and the folks that are there, are never much out of the mind of a good man, do you think, who lives to be old and suffers as the Color Sergeant did?

"Well, at any rate, one night, the night of May 29th, the evening just before father's Grand Army Post would celebrate Memorial Day, he and I—all that were left of our family—were alone in the front room in our little house in Connock.

"Father sat silent, and long had sat that day in the big chair over by the window. He had been sort of dreamy all along through the day, and I lay over opposite the door on the long settee, waiting till he should be ready to turn in.

"It must have been much on past eleven, and the town was so quiet you would have thought it a city of the dead. Actually there was not a sound but a crackle now and then from the spent fire over in the chimney place, the loud ticking of the clock on the shelf and occasionally the rush and roar of the trains in the valley down by the river's edge.

"I dozed off, I guess a dozen times, and then, waking, looked at the Color Sergeant to see if he were asleep; but I never saw him wider awake. He seemed to be waiting and looking for somebody; which was

queer enough, I thought, considering that the whole town was abed.

"But while I looked towards him, in through the door from the deserted street walked Second Sergeant Alan, my brother of whom I told you, dead on San Juan Hill, and whom I had never seen since the day he went to the city joyfully to join his regiment soon after the 'Maine' was sunk in Cuban waters.

"I saw Alan come in dressed in khaki, with his hat turned back from his forehead and his face gray and the blood upon the front of his blouse, and as the Color Sergeant turned on his chair to look at him Sergeant Alan stood straight up before him and said:

" 'You are one of us.'

"I heard those words as you hear mine now, and it was Alan's voice, only softer, somehow, than it used to be. And the Color Sergeant answered:

" 'When will it come?'

" 'It will come tomorrow,' said Alan.

" 'I heard a call for tonight,' the Color Sergeant said again, and his voice fell a little, as if he were grieved a bit.

" 'Tonight,' said Alan, 'we meet the comrades.'

"That was all. Alan did not notice me, and I had no thought, strange as it may seem, to greet him and clasp his hand. What was it? Fear, do you think? No, I was not afraid; but Alan seemed to have some sacred business with the Color Sergeant, and how should I meddle? To father Alan's coming was as if the Second Sergeant had left us yesterday. I am sure father all that day was expecting him.

"So, then, Sergeant Alan turned and went out

upon the street and the Color Sergeant with him. What could I do but follow them? They were my own people. The Color Sergeant's limp had disappeared and so we moved swiftly, I can hardly tell you how, down through the deserted street and over the river bridge toward the Merion hills. It was a moist, sultry night, with the moonlight shining through the scattered white clouds and the thin mist not only filling all the air, but lying in tufts on the face of the river as you have seen it often when warm weather is coming.

"So we passed the bridge quickly and then moved out along that Radnor road over the two miles which seemed but a few rods until among the trees the Gulf Church loomed up to the right of us, and there, on that mound in front of the tower, right beneath the tree on the high corner, stood the figure of a soldier.

"He wore, I noticed, a cocked hat and the white straps were crossed upon back and breast and with his musket, topped by a bayonet, he stood at parade rest.

" 'The picket is out by the church, there,' said the Color Sergeant, my father, to Alan.

" 'It is Corporal Owen Brant, of Wayne's brigade,' answers Alan. 'He waits for the General.' Corporal Owen! That was grandfather, dead these fifty years!

" 'The Corporal was always true,' said the Color Sergeant. 'I follow with him.'

" 'Halt!' said Sergeant Alan, and the three of us stopped and drew off to the left, to the side of the road, and stood by the other corner, where the high-

way comes in from Merion, and where we could look straight off towards Radnor and St. Davids.

"But Corporal Owen, on the mound beneath the tree, made no sign nor seemed to see or hear us, but stood stiffly while he faced, as we did, down the road.

"It was a queer night, with the half-light of the moon shining through the mist and making the objects which would have been plain enough in the clear moonlight indistinct and unreal, You know the white tombstones in the churchyard, high above the road that runs from the corner down to the gap? I have passed them a thousand times in the daylight. But that night, somehow, they looked to me, in an odd way, something like the figures of spectral soldiers standing there in line and waiting, as Corporal Owen was at the corner, to meet somebody.

"Before long, far down the road in front of us, indistinct in the mist, came something, we could hardly for a while determine what. But presently we saw the figure of the General, with his cocked hat and the sharp nose and the shining eyes. And, as he rode along, close behind him marched a dozen gray shadows of men from the ground of old St. Davids, with muskets and trappings and the soldier-things.

"Corporal Owen, on the mound by the church tower, presented arms, and as the General, saluting, turned the corner towards the gap and the Forge, Corporal Owen glided in behind him.

"Then, wonderful sight! down from among the gravestones on the bank beyond the church flocked two score and more of other men, and in they came from the Merion road above and from the road over which we had come from Connock.

"Some wore cocked hats, and they were the Continentals, and among them were the two of Lafayette's men slain by the river-crossing at Matson's Ford. Some wore flat-topped caps, and father said they were men from the Mexican war, laid long ago in the ground at Merion Square. Still others were Civil War men, some of whom I knew and had seen carried to their rest behind the Gulf Church.

"The General led them all with a proud, calm look on his face, a look of joy and exultation. Do you believe he was mad—that man Wayne? No, he was a true soldier, Grandfather Owen, the Corporal, always said, and no rattle-brain. The enemy hated him.

"He loved St. Davids and the peace of that sweet glen, deep in the forest by the rippling stream; but no power could hold him when the comrades rallied at the Forge.

"So they trooped in, a great host, I thought, from St. Davids and Merion and the Gulf and Barren Hill and Matson's Ford, and as they fell in line——

" 'What is the watchword tonight?' said Sergeant Alan.

" 'Paoli,' answered Corporal Owen.

" 'I make it San Juan,' said Sergeant Alan, and the Color Sergeant would have it Chancellorsville.

" 'Chapultepec,' said a comrade in the flat cap.

" 'Silence!' said Corporal Owen. 'The General has made it Paoli.' The commander had given him the word.

"Then the General moved down the sharp decline of the road toward the gloom of the gap where the

moonlight made the shadows darker, and so out and up over the Gulf road the troop pressed forward, I following and keeping close, somehow, to the Brants—to the Color Sergeant and the Corporal and to Alan, though they seemed not to notice me at all.

"As we skirted the forest, lying black along the white road, I could see the gleam of the river away to the right, and far off below us and in front through the humid air the shining lights in the streets of the country town.

"They say that time and space are unknown in that other world. I can believe it, for I am sure I could not tell how it was we came so swiftly to the hills around Valley Forge and found ourselves among the entrenchments.

"Down the road we went—down the road among the shadows of the trees that lay across it, until we came nearly to the bridge over the creek, and there, by a clump of pine trees, we stopped and waited.

"We four Brants, the living and the dead, stood together in silence and I with astonishment and perplexity.

"Why, do you suppose, did not the Corporal and Sergeant Alan go off and troop with the comrades? Was it, I have often thought, that they wanted to hearten the Color Sergeant and me? Or was it that they would prove to us that the love of kin is stronger than death? I know that having them there with us kept me in courage.

"Off below us in the valley by the stream there was a confused noise, but I could not tell if it were the sound of voices or only the plunging of the waters

through the gorge. Now and then I thought I heard the muffled rolling of drums, but it might have been the low rumbling of the thunder beyond the hills that rim the valley.

"Across the road from us the ground was lifted a little way and in the dim light there seemed to be figures gathering by the trees that grouped themselves there. I could make out nothing plainly for the mist that covered the grass and crept around the trunks of the trees; but Corporal Owen, not moving his head or seeming to speak to one of us, said:

" 'It is the Commander-in-Chief and the Marquis and the staff.'

"I looked closer then, and tried to catch the outlines of the figures, for what would I not have given to see the face of that great soldier the Corporal said was standing there!

"But, while I strained my eyes, the voices below us were hushed as the drum sounds quickened and, in a minute, up the road came the General I had seen coming fron St. Davids, and behind him streamed an army of men.

"They filed before the Commander, rank on rank, a multitude beyond counting, in great array, with all the accoutrements of the soldier, and, as they swept forward, a man on the right of the file thrust upward his sword, saluting the Commander and crying (I can hear that voice yet):

" 'O death, where is thy sting?'

" 'Henry Joyce!' said Corporal Owen, my grandfather, standing by my side. 'He died at Paoli.'

"And then another warrior, with sword uplifted, cried out, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

"'Hah!' exclaimed the Color Sergeant, my father, 'Anthony Shard! I missed you, Anthony, at Fredericksburg.'

"Then, still another, after a moment's silence, his sword brandished high above him, exclaimed, 'All I had I gave,' and the Corporal, recognizing him, muttered, 'Donald Golden; shot at Molino del Rey.' 'Not for glory, but for right!' another said, and another, 'I counted not my life dear unto me,' and the Color Sergeant knew them both. 'Amos Turle,' he said, 'dead at Gettysburg; and Thomas Archer, he dropped in the firing-line beside me at South Mountain.'

"As the files went by a soldier in a cocked hat made the salute, shouting, 'We hunger no more, neither thirst any more,' and the Corporal said to him, 'Right! Joseph Furlong; I remember how you suffered here at the Forge.'

"'Sharp pain, sweet peace!' came from another man's lips, and from another, 'O dear land I died for!' And so from Stony Point and Churubusco and Brandywine and Germantown and Kenesaw Mountain and a score of other battlefields, the messages came, one after another. The Corporal and Color Sergeant knew every man, and hailed them all, whilst Alan and I stood silent and amazement filled my soul.

"I cannot reckon how long it took for that vast army to march by us, but to me it seemed that hours must have passed. And then the mist rolled in thicker and thicker, covering the bank where the Commander stood and piling up like a snow drift along and across the road.

"While I looked and looked and wondered, I heard the wind coming with a rush through the forest.

"Do you remember how it tells in First Chronicles that, when David would go out to war, the Lord said to him, 'It shall be when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees that then thou shalt go out to battle, for God is gone forth before thee?' Do you remember that? Well, I heard that very sound, as if the breath of heaven rustled the tops of the chestnut trees there, at the Forge, and swayed them to and fro while the great army of the Lord went on its wonderful way, and He, I truly believe, went forth before them.

"And as I looked upward while the trees bent before the wind, behold the breeze fell upon the road and swept the mist away, and all were gone—the Commander, the marching troops, the Corporal, Second Sergeant Alan and my father, the Color Sergeant. Gone! and I stood alone below the pine trees with no creature near to me.

"I should have trouble to tell you just how I got home again. As I turned towards the river there was a faint glimmer of the morning far off in the east, along the horizon. I went that way and I know I crept homeward by the edge of the stream in the wet grass, and with the light tufts of fog still clinging to the water.

"The water was white and still, as you may see it any time in the very early morning, and there was, I remember, a strange quietness, as though all the world were still asleep.

"I do not remember clearly, for my mind was in

strange confusion, but I know I stumbled along, and here was a chimney by the river-brink sending up a thin column of smoke, and there a flock of birds darted noiselessly over the surface of the river, and I heard the roar of a blast furnace and the rattle of a train, and so, somehow, without clear knowledge of my movements, I found myself on the settee in our front room and saw the Color Sergeant sitting by the window, in the big chair, just as he had been in the late evening.

"I did not understand it then, nor do I understand it now. Nor could I speak with the Color Sergeant about it. For when the familiar things of home had permitted me to get my mental balance once again, the Color Sergeant seemed not to hear my voice as I tried to talk with him.

"That was the morning of Memorial Day, and father well knew it. He would take no food, but he sat there with the face of a man who belonged to another world.

"He seemed to think Alan was with him, for every now and then he would speak as though he were answering some one: 'It was for our country, Sergeant,' he said. 'The Brants were always true'; or he would say, 'You were kind to come for me, Sergeant. The Brants always stood by one another.' Once he said, 'The color shall be my shroud, my son, and I want no other,' and, as if in response to a question: 'Yes, I am ready,' and all through the early morning he repeated, 'Best of all is sacrifice,' and 'God shall wipe away all tears.'

"When the time came for the Post to march over

to the graveyard behind the Gulf Church to hold the service I thought him not fit to go, after such a night; and I urged him to stay; but he would have the color brought to him from the armory, and gripping the staff, he said:

"'Sergeant Alan will be there, and the Corporal, and I must help to fire the volley today, before I go over. Unfurl the color for them and for the General.'

"And so he loosed and flung free the flag with its tatters and its battle-names in dingy gilt, and took his place in the line. I carried his musket for him as we moved down the street and then up the road towards the church.

"The services among the gravestones were soon ended, and the Color Sergeant took his musket and went over with the squad that would fire the volley, while a comrade stood behind him with the flag.

"I was anxious for him, so old and lame and weak, and I put myself as near to him as I could.

"It was curious for us in our time to see them load their guns. The Color Sergeant and the rest put the butt of the musket against the left foot and began to load in nine motions, after the old fashion of the Civil War.

"At the first volley the report, reverberating among the hills that cooped us in there, came back sharply as a double echo. When the Color Sergeant heard the response and the echo of the bugle as it rang out after the shot, he lifted his head, his face flushed, and there was a gleam in his faded blue eyes.

"He turned his cap with the visor to the side as he often told me he had done at Chancellorsville. Once

more he rammed home the cartridge in his musket, but with a kind of fierceness in his manner and in his countenance.

"Again the echoes came back from the hills and even to me it seemed almost as if an answering volley had been fired by soldiers near at hand.

"Some said they heard, rolling through the defile of the gap, far off to the right of the cemetery, what might have been the half-smothered rattle of a volley from the Forge; but I heard it not.

"The echoing reports from the hills and the bugle-blast seemed to make the blood of the Color Sergeant hot. He looked as if he had suddenly grown taller.

"With haste, but carefully observing the rule which required nine motions, he reloaded.

" 'Fire!' he exclaimed, and then, as from the encircling hills came the wonderful multiplied reverberations, the wind flapped the color towards him. He leaped at it, and seizing the staff with both hands, he waved it while he shouted, 'Forward! Forward!'

"Then he made as if he would have rushed onward. But the strong breeze blew the flag in his face, and clear round his body, and the foot of the staff caught upon the little mound above a grave and threw him down.

"He fell forward and lay still. He must have struck his head, I think, upon the gravestone, for when the comrades sprang to lift him, he was quite dead.

"He was wrapped in the ragged color as in a winding sheet, and around him from head to foot in letters of tarnished gold were the names of Gettysburg and Antietam and Chancellorsville."

# VI

## THE FORTUNATE ISLAND*

### THE ISLAND

WHEN the good ship "Morning Star," bound to Liverpool from New York, foundered at sea, the officers, the crew, and all of the passengers but two, escaped in the boats. Professor E. L. Baffin and his daughter, Matilda Baffin, preferred to intrust themselves to a patent india-rubber life-raft, which the Professor was carrying with him to Europe, with the hope that he should sell certain patent rights in the contrivance.

There was time enough, before the ship sank, to inflate the raft and to place upon it all the trunks and bundles belonging to the Professor and Matilda. These were lashed firmly to the rubber cylinders, and thus Professor Baffin was encouraged to believe that he might save from destruction all of the scientific implements and apparatus which he had brought with him from the Balligomingo University, near Connock, Pa., to illustrate the course of lectures which he had engaged to give in England and Scotland.

Having made the luggage fast, the Professor handed Matilda down from the ship's side, and when he had

*It is necessary to say that this tale was first published in 1881 and antedates a story with a similar theme by a noted author.

tied her to one of the trunks and secured himself to another, he cut the raft adrift, and, with the occupants of the boats, sorrowfully watched the brave old "Morning Star" settle down deeper and deeper into the water; until at last, with a final plunge, she dipped beneath the surface and disappeared.

The prospect was a cheerless one for all of the party. The sea was not dangerously rough; but the captain estimated that the nearest land was at least eight hundred miles distant; and, although there were in the boats and upon the raft provisions and water enough for several days, the chance was small that a port could be made before the supplies should be exhausted. There was, moreover, almost a certainty that the boats would be swamped if they should encounter a severe storm.

The Professor, for his part, felt confident that the raft would outlive any storm; but his shipmates regarded his confidence in it as an indication of partial insanity.

The captain rested his expectations of getting ashore chiefly upon the fact that they were in the line of greatest travel across the Atlantic, so that they might reasonably look to meet, within a day or two, with a vessel of some kind which would rescue them.

As the night came on, it was agreed that the boats and the raft should keep together, and the captain had provided a lantern, which was swung, lighted, aloft upon an oar, so that the position of his boat could be determined. The Professor, with his raft under sail, steered along in the wake of the boats

for several hours, Matilda, meanwhile, sleeping calmly, after the exciting and exhausting labors of the day, upon a couple of trunks.

As the night wore on, a brisk wind sprang up, and shortly afterward the light upon the captain's boat for some reason disappeared. The Professor was somewhat perplexed when he missed it, but he concluded that the safest plan would be to steer about upon the course he had hitherto held, and then to communicate with the boats if they should be within sight in the morning.

The wind increased in force about midnight, and the raft rolled and pitched in such a manner that the Professor's faith in it really lost some of its force. Several times huge waves swept over it, drenching the Professor and his daughter, and filling them with grave apprehensions of the result if the storm should become more violent.

Even amid the peril, however, Professor Baffin could not but admire the heroic courage and composure of Matilda, who sat upon her trunk, wet and shivering with cold, without showing a sign of fear, but trying to encourage her father with words of hope and cheer.

When the dawn came, dim and gray, the gale abated its force, and although the sea continued rough, the raft rode the waves more buoyantly and easily. Producing some matches from his waterproof box, the Professor lighted the kerosene lamp in the tiny stove which was in one of the boxes; and then Matilda, with water from the barrel, began to try to make some coffee. The attempt seemed

to promise to be successful, and while the process was going on, the Professor looked about for the boats. They could not be seen. The Professor took out his glass and swept the horizon. In vain; the boats had disappeared completely; but the Professor saw something else that attracted his attention, and made his heart for a moment stop beating.

Right ahead, not distinctly outlined, but visible in a misty sort of way, he thought he discerned land!

At first he could not believe the evidence of his sight. The captain, an expert navigator, had assured him that they were eight hundred miles from any shore. But this certainly looked to the Professor very much like land. He examined it through his glass. Even then the view was not clear enough to remove all doubts, but it strengthened his conviction; and when Matilda looked she said she knew it was land. She could trace the outline of a range of hills.

"Tilly," said the Professor, "we are saved! It *is* the land, and the raft is drifting us directly towards it. We cannot be sufficiently thankful, my child, for this great mercy! Who would have expected it? Taken altogether, it is the most extraordinary circumstance within my recollection."

"Captain Duffer must have made a miscalculation," said Tilly. "The ship must have been off of her course when she sprang a leak."

"It is incomprehensible how so old a sailor could have made such a blunder," replied the Professor.

"But there the land is; I can see it now distinctly. It looks to me like a very large island."

"Are you going ashore at once, pa?"

"Certainly, dear; that is, if we can make a landing through the breakers."

"Suppose there are cannibals on it, pa? It would be horrid to have them eat us!"

"They would have to fatten us first, darling; and that would give us an opportunity to study their habits. It would be extremely interesting!"

"But the study would be of no use if they should eat us!"

"All knowledge is useful, Tilly; I could write out the results of our observations, and probably set them adrift in a bottle!"

"It is such a dreadful death!"

"Try to look at it philosophically! There is really nothing more unpleasant about the idea of being digested than there is about the thought of being buried."

"Oh, pa!"

"No, my child! It is merely a sentiment. If I shall be eaten, and we have volition after death, I am determined to know how I agreed with the man who had me for dinner! Tilly, I have a notion that you would eat tender!"

"Pa, you are simply awful!"

"To me, indeed, there is something inspiring in the thought that my physical substance, when I have done with it, should nourish the vitality of another being. I don't like to think that I may be wasted."

"You seem as if you rather hoped we should find savage cannibals upon the island!"

"No, Tilly; I hope we shall not. I believe we shall not. Man-eaters are rarely found in this latitude. My impression is that the island is not inhabited at all. Probably it is of recent volcanic origin. If so, we may have a chance to examine a newly-formed crater. I have longed to do so for years."

"We might as well be eaten as to be blown up and burned up by a volcano," said Matilda.

"It would be a grand thing, though, to be permitted to observe, without interruption, the operation of one of the mightiest forces of nature! I could make a magnificent report to the Philosophical Society about it; that is, if we should ever get home again."

"For my part," said Matilda, "I hope it contains neither cannibals nor volcanoes; I hope it is simply a charming island without a man or a beast upon it."

"Something like Robinson Crusoe's, for example! I have often thought I should like to undergo his experiences. It must be, to an inquiring mind, exceedingly instructive to observe in what manner a civilized man, thrown absolutely upon his own resources, contrives to conduct his existence. I could probably enrich my lecture upon Sociology if we should be compelled to remain upon the island for a year or two."

"But we should starve to death in that time!"

"So we should; unless, indeed, the island produces fruits of some kind from its soil. I think it does. It seems to be covered with trees, Tilly, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Matilda, looking through the glass. "It is a mass of verdure. It is perfectly beautiful. I believe I see something that looks like a building, too."

"Impossible! you see a peculiar rock formation, no doubt; I sha'n't be surprised if there is enough in the geological formation of the island to engage my attention so long as we remain."

"But what am I to do, meantime?"

"You? Oh, you can label my specimens and keep the journal; and maybe you might hunt around for fossils a little yourself."

The raft rapidly moved toward the shore, and the eyes of both of the voyagers were turned toward it inquiringly and eagerly. Who could tell how long the island might be their home, and what strange adventures might befall them there?

"The wind is blowing right on shore, Tilly," said the Professor. "I will steer straight ahead, and I shouldn't wonder if we could shoot the breakers safely. Isn't that a sand-beach right in front there?" inquired the Professor, elevating his nose a little, to get his spectacles in focus. "It looks like one."

"Yes, it is," replied Matilda, looking through her glass.

"First-rate! Couldn't have been better. There, we will drive right in. Tilly, hoist my umbrella, so as to give her more sail!"

The raft fairly danced across the waves under the increased pressure, and in a moment or two it was rolling in the swell just outside of the line of white breakers. Before the Professor had time to think

what he should do to avoid the shock, a huge wave uplifted the raft and ran it high upon the beach with such violence as to compel the Professor to turn a somersault over a trunk. He recovered himself at once, and replacing his spectacles he proceeded, with the assistance of Matilda, to pull the raft up beyond the reach of the waves.

Then, wet and draggled, with sand on his coat, and his hat knocked completely out of shape, he stood rubbing his chin with his hand. and thoughtfully observing the breakers.

"Extraordinary force, Tilly, that of the ocean surf—clear waste, too, apparently. If we stay here long enough, I must try to find out the secret of its motion."

"Hadn't we better put on some dry clothing first?" suggested Miss Baffin, "and examine the surf afterwards? For my part I have had enough of it."

"Certainly! Have you the keys of the trunks? Everything soaking wet, most likely."

When the trunks were unfastened, the Professor was delighted to find that the contents were perfectly dry. Selecting some clothing for himself, he went behind a huge rock and proceeded to dress. Matilda, after looking carefully about, retreated to a group of trees, and beneath their shelter made her toilette.

"Isn't this a magnificent place?" said the Professor, when Matilda, nicely dressed, came out to where he was standing by the raft.

"Perfectly lovely."

"Noble trees, rich grass, millions of wild flowers,

birds twittering above us, a matchless sky, a bracing air, and—why, halloa! there's a stream of running water! We must have a drink of that, the very first thing. Delicious, isn't it?" asked the Professor, when Miss Baffin, after drinking, returned the cup to him.

"It is nectar."

"I tell you what, Tilly, I am not sure that it wouldn't be a good thing to be compelled to live here for two or three years. The vegetation shows that we are in a temperate latitude, and I know I can find or raise enough to eat in such a place as this."

"Why, pa, look there!"

"Where?"

"Over there. Don't you see that castle?"

"Castle? No! What! Why, yes, it is! Bless my soul, Tilly, the place is inhabited!"

"Who would have thought of finding a building like that on an island in mid-ocean?"

"It is the most extraordinary circumstance, taking it altogether, that ever came under my observation," said the Professor, looking towards the distant edifice. "So far as I can make out, it is a castle of an early period."

"Mediæval?"

"Well, not later than the seventh or eighth century, at the farthest. Tilly, I feel as if something remarkable were going to happen."

"Pa, you frighten me!"

"No, I mean something that will be extraordinarily interesting. I know it. The voice of instinct tells me so. Have you your journal with you?"

"It is in the trunk."

"Get it and your lead-pencils. We will drag the baggage farther up from the water, and then we will push towards the castle. I am going to know the date of that structure before I sleep tonight."

"There can hardly be any danger, I suppose?" suggested Miss Baffin, rather timidly.

"Oh, no, of course not; I have my revolver with me. Let me see; where is it? Ah, here. And the cartridges are waterproof. I think I will put a few things in a valise, also. We might find the castle empty, and have to depend upon ourselves for supper."

The Professor then let the air out of the raft, and folded the flattened cylinders together.

When the valise was ready, the Professor grasped it, shouldered his umbrella, and said, "Now, come, darling, and we will find out what all this means."

The pair started along a broad path which ran by the side of the stream, following the course of the brook, and winding in and out among trees of huge girth and gigantic height. Birds of familiar species flitted from branch to branch before them, as if to lead them on their way; now and then a brown rabbit, after eyeing them for a moment with quivering nostrils, beat a quick tattoo upon the ground with his hind legs, then threw up his tail and whisked into the shrubbery. Gray squirrels scrambled around the trunks of the trees to look at them, and once a screaming, blue-crested kingfisher ceased his complaining while he plunged into one of the pools of the rivulet, and emerged with a trout in his talons.

It was an enchanting scene; and Miss Baffin enjoyed it thoroughly as she stepped blithely by the side of her father, who seemed to find especial pleasure in discovering that the herbage, the trees, the rocks, and all the other natural objects, were precisely like those with which he had been familiar at home.

After following the path for some time, the pair came to a place where the brook widened into a great pool, through which the water went sluggishly, bearing upon its surface bubbles and froth, which told how it had been tossed and broken by rapid descent over the rocks in some narrow channel above. Here the Professor stopped to observe an uncommonly large and green bullfrog, which sat upon a slimy stone a few yards away, looking solemnly at him.

During the pause, they were startled to hear a voice saying to them:

"Good morrow, gentle friends."

Matilda uttered a partly-suppressed scream, and even the Professor jumped backward a foot or two in astonishment.

Looking toward the place from which the voice came, they saw an old man with gray hair and beard lifting a large stone pitcher, which he had been filling from the pool. He was dressed in a long and rather loose robe, which reached from his shoulders to his feet, and which was gathered about his waist with a knotted cord. This was his entire costume, for his feet were bare, and he wore no hat to hide the rich masses of hair which fell to his

shoulders. As he offered his salutation, he raised his pitcher until he stood upright, and then he looked at the Professor and Miss Baffin with a pleasant smile, in which there were traces of curiosity.

"Good afternoon," returned the Professor, after a moment's hesitation; "how are you?"

"Are you not strangers in this land?" asked the old man.

"Well, yes," said the Professor, briskly, with a manifest purpose to be sociable; "we have just come ashore down here on the beach. Shipwrecked, in fact. This is my daughter. Let me introduce you. My child, allow me to make you acquainted with—with—beg pardon, but I think you did not mention your name."

"I am known as Father Anselm."

"Ah, indeed! Matilda, this is Father Anselm. A clergyman, I suppose?"

"I am a hermit; my cell is close at hand. You will be welcome there if you will visit it."

"A hermit! Living in a cell! Well, this *is* surprising! We shall be only too happy to visit you, if you will permit us. Delightful, isn't it, dear? We shall obtain some valuable information from the old gentleman."

The Hermit, with the pitcher poised upon his shoulder, led the way, and he was closely followed by the Professor and by Matilda, who regarded the proceeding rather with nervous apprehension. The Hermit's cell was a huge cave, excavated from the side of a hill. The floor was covered with sprigs of fragrant evergreens. A small table stood upon

one side of the apartment; beside it was a rough bench, which was the only seat in the room. A crucifix, a candle, a skull, an hour-glass, and a few simple utensils were the only other articles to be seen.

The Hermit brought forward the bench for his visitors to sit upon, and then, procuring a cup, he offered each a drink of water.

The Professor, hugging one knee with interlocked fingers, seemed anxious to open a conversation.

"Pardon me, sir, but do I understand that you are a clergyman; that is to say, some sort of a teacher of religion?"

"I belong to a religious order. I am a recluse."

"Roman Catholic, I presume?" said the Professor, glancing at the crucifix.

"Your meaning is not wholly clear to me," replied the Hermit.

"What are your views? Do you lean to Calvinism, or do you think the Arminians, upon the whole, have the best of the argument?"

"The gentleman does not understand you, pa," said Miss Baffin.

"Never mind, then; we will not press it. But I should like very much if you would tell us something about this place; this country around here," said the Professor, waving his hand towards the door.

"Let me ask first of the misadventure which cast you unwillingly upon our shores?" said the Hermit.

"Well, you see, I sailed from New York on the twenty-third of last month, with my daughter here, to fulfil an engagement to deliver a course of lectures in England."

"In England!" exclaimed the Hermit, with an appearance of eager interest.

"Yes, in England. I am a professor, you know, in an American university. When we were about half way across, the ship sprang a leak, from some cause now unknown. My daughter and I got off with our baggage upon a life-raft, which I most fortunately had with me. The rest of the passengers and the crew escaped in the boats. I became separated from them, and drifted here. That is the whole story."

"I comprehend only a part of what you say," replied the Hermit. "But it is enough that you have suffered; I give you hearty welcome."

"Thank you. And now tell me where I am."

"You spoke of England a moment ago," said the Hermit. "Let me begin with it. Hundreds of years ago, in the time of King Arthur, of noble fame, it happened, by some means even yet not revealed to us, that a vast portion of that island separated from the rest, and drifted far out upon the ocean. It carried with it hundreds of people—noble, and gentle, and humble. This is that country."

"In-*deed!*" exclaimed the Professor. "This? This island that we are on? Amazing!"

"It is true," responded the Hermit.

"Why, Tilly, do you hear that? This is the lost Atlantis! We have been driven ashore on the far-famed Fortunate Island! Wonderful, isn't it? Taking everything into consideration, I must say this certainly is the most extraordinary circumstance I ever encountered!"

"Nobody among us has ever heard anything from England or of it, excepting through tradition. No ship comes to our shores, and those of us who have builded boats and gone away in search of adventure have never come back. Sometimes I think the island has not ended its wanderings, but is still floating about; but we cannot tell."

"But, my dear sir," said the Professor, "you can take your latitude and longitude at any time, can't you?"

"Take what?"

"Your latitude and longitude! Find out exactly in what part of the world you are?"

"I never heard that such a thing was done. None of our people have that kind of learning."

"Well, but you have schools and colleges, and you acquire knowledge, don't you?"

"We have a few schools; but only the low-born children attend them, and they are taught only what their fathers learned. We do not try to know more. We reverence the past. It is a matter of pride among us to preserve the habits, the manners, the ideas, the social state which our forefathers had when they were sundered from their nation."

"You live here pretty much as King Arthur and his subjects lived?"

"Yes. We have our chivalry; our knight errants; our tournaments; our castles—everything just as it was in the old time."

"My dear," said the Professor to Miss Baffin, "the wildest imagination could have conceived nothing like this. We shall be afforded an opportunity to study the middle ages on the spot."

"Sometimes," said the Hermit, gravely, "I have secret doubts whether our way is the best, whether in England and the rest of the world men may not have learned while we have remained ignorant; but I cannot tell. And no one would be willing to change if we could know the truth."

"My friend," said the Professor, with a look of compassion, "the world has gone far, far ahead of King Arthur's time! It has almost forgotten that there ever was such a time. You would hardly believe me, at any rate you would not understand me, if I should tell you of the present state of things in the world. But if I stay here I shall try to enlighten you gradually. I feel as if I had been sent here as a missionary for that very purpose."

"Do you come from England?"

"Oh, no! I was going thither. I came from the United States. You never heard of them, of course. They are a land right across the ocean from England, about three thousand miles."

"Discovered by a man named Columbus," said Miss Baffin.

"Your dress is an odd one," continued the Hermit. "Are you a fighting man?"

"A fighting man! Oh, no, of course not. I'm a Professor."

"Then this is not a weapon that you carry."

"Bless my soul, my dear sir! Why, this is an umbrella! Tilly, we have to deal with a very primitive condition of things here. It is both entertaining and instructive."

"What is it for?"

"I will show you. Suppose it begins to rain, I untie this string and open the umbrella, *so!* Now, don't be alarmed! It is perfectly harmless, I assure you!"

The holy man had retreated suddenly into the farthest recess of the cell.

"While it rains I hold it in this manner. When it clears, I shut it up, *thus*, and put it under my arm."

"Wonderful! wonderful!" exclaimed the Hermit. "I thought it was an implement of war. The world beyond us evidently has surpassed us."

"This is nothing to the things I will show you," said the Professor. "I see you have an hour-glass here. Is this the only way you have of recording time?"

"We have the sun."

"No clocks or watches?"

"I do not know what they are."

"Tilly, show him your watch. This is the machine with which we tell time."

"Alive, is it?" asked the Hermit.

The Professor explained the mechanism to him in detail.

"You are indeed a learned man," said the recluse. "But I have forgotten a part of my duty. Will you not take some food?"

"Well," said the Professor, "if you have anything about in the form of a lunch, I think I could dispose of it."

"I am awfully hungry," said Miss Baffin.

The Hermit produced a piece of meat, and hang-

ing it upon a turnspit he gathered a few sticks and placed them beneath it. The Professor watched him closely; and when the holy man took in his hands a flint and steel with which to ignite the wood, the Professor exclaimed:

"One moment! Let me start that fire for you?"

Taking from his pocket an old newspaper, he put it beneath the sticks; then from his match-box he took a match, and striking it there was a blaze in a moment.

The Hermit crossed himself and muttered a prayer at this performance.

"No cause for alarm, I assure you," said the Professor.

"You must be a wizard," said the Hermit.

"No; I did that with what we call a match; like this one. There is stuff on the end which catches fire when you rub it," and the Professor again ignited a match.

"I never could have dreamed that such a thing could be," exclaimed the recluse. "You will be regarded by our people as the most marvelous magician that ever lived."

The Professor laughed.

"Oh," said he, "I will let them know it is not magic. We must clear all that nonsense away. Tilly, I feel that duty points me clearly to the task of delivering a course of lectures upon this island."

During the repast, the Hermit, looking timidly at Professor Baffin, said:

"Would it seem discourteous if I should ask you another question?"

"Certainly not. I shall be glad to give you any information you may want."

"What, then," inquired the Hermit, "is the reason why you protect your eyes with glass windows?"

"These," said the Professor, removing his spectacles, "are intended to improve the sight. I cannot see well without them. With them I have perfect vision. Tilly, make a memorandum in the journal that my first lecture shall be upon Optics."

"Pa, I wish we could learn something about the castle we saw," observed Miss Baffin.

"Oh, yes; by the way, Father Anselm," said the Professor, "we observed an old-fashioned castle over yonder, as we came here. Can you tell me anything about it?"

"The castle," replied the Hermit, "is the home and the stronghold of Sir Bors, Baron of Lonazep. He is a great and powerful noble. much feared in this country."

"Any family?" inquired the Professor.

"He has a gallant son, Sir Dinadan, as brave a knight as ever levelled lance, and a beautiful daughter, Ysolt. Both are unmarried; but the fair Ysolt fondly loves Sir Bleoberis, to whom, however, the Baron will not suffer her to be wedded, because Sir Bleoberis, though bold and skilful, has little wealth."

"Human nature, you observe, my child, is the same everywhere. We have heard of something like this at home," remarked the Professor to his daughter.

"Ysolt is loved also by another knight, Sir Dagonet. He has great riches, and is very powerful;

but he is a bad and dangerous man, and the Baron will not consent to give him Ysolt to wife. These matters cause much strife and much unhappiness."

"It's the same way with us," observed the Professor; "I have known lots of such cases."

"I hope we shall stay here long enough to see how it all turns out," said Miss Baffin.

"Of course," replied the Professor. "You hated the island when you thought it might promote the interests of science. But some lovers' nonsense would keep you here willingly for life. Just like a woman."

"The King," said the Hermit, "has espoused the cause of Sir Bleoberis, and we hope he may win the lady for the knight whom she loves."

"The King, eh? Then you have a monarchical government?"

"We have eleven kings upon this island."

"All reigning?"

"Yes."

"How many people are there in the whole island?"

"No one knows, exactly. One hundred thousand, possibly."

"Not ten thousand men apiece for the kings! Humph! In my country we have a million men in one town, and nobody but a common man to rule them."

"Incredible!"

"And what is the name of your particular king—the one who is lord of this part of the country?"

"King Brandegore; a wise, and good, and valiant monarch."

"Tilly," said the Professor, "you might as well jot that down. Eleven kings on the island, and King Brandegore running this part of the government. I must get acquainted with him."

When the meal was finished the Professor said to the recluse:

"Do you allow smoking?"

"Smoking!"

"Pray excuse me! I forgot. If you will permit me, I will introduce you to another of the practices of modern civilization."

Then the Professor lighted a cigar, and, sitting on the bench in a comfortable position, with his back against the wall of the cave, he began to puff out whiffs of smoke.

The Hermit, with a look of alarm, was about to ask for an explanation of the performance, when loud cries were heard outside of the cave mingled with frightened exclamations from a woman.

The occupants of the cavern started to their feet, just as a beautiful girl, dressed in a quaint but charming costume, ran into the doorway in such haste that she dashed plump up against the Professor, who caught her in his arms.

For a moment she was startled at seeing two strangers in a place where she had thought to encounter none but the Hermit; but her dread of her pursuer overcame her diffidence, and, clinging to the Professor, she exclaimed:

"Oh, save me! save me!"

"Certainly I will," said the Professor, soothingly, as his arm tightened its clasp about her waist.

"What's the matter? Don't be afraid, my child. Who is pursuing you?"

The Professor was not displeased at the situation in which he found himself. The damsel was fair to see, and the head which rested, in what seemed to him sweet confidence, upon his shoulder, was crowned with golden hair of matchless beauty. Even amid the intense excitement of the moment the reflection flashed through the Professor's mind that he was a widower and that Matilda had always expressed a willingness to try to love a stepmother.

"My father! The Baron! He threatens to kill me," sobbed the maiden, and then, tearing herself away from the Professor in a manner which struck him as being, to say the least, inconsiderate, she flew to Father Anselm and said, "You, holy father, will save me."

"I will try, my daughter; I will try," replied the Hermit. And then, turning to the Professor he said, "It is Ysolt."

"Ah!" said the Professor, "the Baron's daughter. May I ask you, miss, what the old gentleman is so excited about? It is not one of the customs here for indignant parents to chase their children around the country, is it?"

"I had gone from the castle," said the damsel, partly to the Hermit and partly to Professor Baffin, "to meet Sir Bleoberis at the trysting-place. My father was watching me, and as I neared the spot he rushed toward me with a drawn sword, threatening to kill me."

"It is an outrageous shame!" exclaimed the Professor, sympathetically.

"I eluded him," continued the sobbing girl, "and flew towards this place. When he saw me at last he gave chase. I am afraid he will slay me when he comes."

"I think, perhaps, I may be able to reason with this person when he arrives," said the Professor, rubbing his chin and looking at the hermit over the top of his spectacles. "The Baron ought to be ashamed of himself to go on in this manner! Tilly, wipe the poor creature's eyes with your handkerchief. There now, dear, cheer up."

Just then the Baron rushed into the cell, with his eyes flaming, and his breath coming short and fast.

He was a large man, with a handsome face, thickly covered with beard. He was dressed in doublet, trunks and hose, and over one shoulder a mantle hung gracefully. His sword was in its sheath, and it was manifest that he had repented of his murderous purpose.

"Where is that faithless girl?" he demanded in a voice of thunder.

Ysolt had hidden behind Matilda Baffin.

"Say, priest, where have you secreted her?"

"One moment!" said the Professor, stepping forward. "May I, without appearing impertinent, offer a suggestion?"

"Out, varlet!" exclaimed the Baron, pushing him aside. "Tell me, Hermit, where is Ysolt."

The Professor was actually pale with indignation. Pushing himself in front of the Baron, and brandishing his umbrella in a determined way he said:

"Old man, I want you to understand that you have to deal with a free and independent American citizen! What do you mean by 'varlet'? I hurl the opprobrious word back into your teeth, sir! I am not going to put up with such conduct, I'd like you to know!"

The Baron for the first time perceived what manner of man the Professor was, and he paused for a moment amid his rage to eye the stranger with astonishment.

"Why do you want to hurt the young woman? Is this any way for an affectionate father to behave to his own offspring? Allow me to say, sir, that I'll be hanged if I think it is! If you don't want her to marry Sir What's-his-name, don't let her; but it strikes me that charging around the country after her, and threatening to kill her, is an evidence that you don't understand the first principles of domestic discipline!"

"What do you mean? Who are you? What are you doing here?" demanded the Baron, fiercely, recovering his self-possession.

"I am Professor E. L. Baffin, of Balligomingo University, Connock, Pa.; and I mean to try to persuade you to treat your daughter more gently," said the Professor, cooling as he remembered that the Baron had a father's authority.

"You have a weapon. I will fight you," said the Baron, drawing his sword.

The Professor put his cigar in his mouth, and opened his umbrella suddenly in the Baron's face.

The Baron retreated a distance of twenty feet and looked scared.

"Come," said the Professor, closing his umbrella and smiling, "I am not a fighting man. We will not quarrel. Let us talk the matter over calmly."

But the Baron, mortified because of the alarm that he had manifested, rushed savagely at the Professor, and would have felled him to the earth had not Matilda sprung forward and placed herself, shrieking, between the Baron and her father.

At this precise juncture, also, a young man entered the cell, and, seeing the Baron apparently about to strike a woman, seized his sword-arm and held it. The Baron turned sharply about. Recognizing the youth as his son, he simply looked at him angrily, and then, while Miss Baffin clung to the Professor, the Baron seized Ysolt by the arm and led her weeping away.

The Professor, after freeing himself from Miss Baffin's embrace, extended his hand to the youth, and said:

"I have not the honor of knowing you, sir, but you have behaved handsomely. Permit me to inquire your name?"

"Sir Dinadan; the son of the Baron," said the youth, taking hold of the Professor's hand, as if he were somewhat uncertain what he had better do with it.

"No last name?" asked the Professor.

"That is all. And you are—?"

"I am Everett L. Baffin, a Professor in the Balligomingo University. I was cast ashore down here with my daughter. Tilly, let me introduce to you Sir Dinadan."

Sir Dinadan colored, and dropping upon his knee he seized Miss Baffin's hand and kissed it. Rising, he said:

"What, Sir Baffin, is the name of the sweet lady?"

"Matilda."

"How lovely!" exclaimed Sir Dinadan.

"It is abbreviated sometimes to Tilly, by her friends."

"It is too beautiful," said the youth, gazing at Miss Baffin with unconcealed admiration. "I trust, Sir Baffin, I may be able to serve in some manner you and the Lady Tilly."

"Professor Baffin, my dear sir; not Sir Baffin. Permit me to offer you my card."

Sir Dinadan took the card, and seemed perplexed as to its meaning. He turned it over and over in a despairing sort of way in his fingers.

"If you will read it," said the Professor, "you will find my name upon it."

"But, Sir Baffin, I cannot read."

"Can't read!" exclaimed the Professor, in amazement. "You don't mean to say that you have never learned to read!"

"High-born people," replied Sir Dinadan, with an air of indifference, "care nothing for learning. We leave that to the monks."

"This," said the Professor to Miss Baffin, "is one of the most extraordinary circumstances that has yet come under my observation. Tilly, mention in your journal that the members of the upper classes are wholly illiterate."

"As the Lady Tilly is a stranger here," said Sir

Dinadan, "I should be glad to have her walk with me to the brow of the hill. I will show her our beautiful park."

"That would be splendid!" said Miss Baffin. "May I go, pa?"

"Well, I don't know," said the Professor, with hesitation, and looking inquiringly at the Hermit. As that individual appeared to regard the proposition with no such feeling of alarm as would indicate a breach of ordinary social custom, the Professor continued, "Yes, dear, but be sure not to go beyond earshot."

Sir Dinadan, smiling, led Miss Baffin away, and the Professor sat down to finish his cigar and to have some further conversation with the Hermit. Before he had time to begin, two other visitors arrived. Both were young men, gaily dressed in rich costume. One of them, whom the recluse greeted as Sir Bleoberis, had a tall, slender figure and an exceedingly handsome countenance, which was adorned with a moustache and pointed beard. His companion, Sir Agravaine, was smaller, less comely, and if his face was an index of his mind, by no means so intelligent.

After being presented to the Professor, whom they regarded with not a little curiosity, Sir Bleoberis said:

"Holy father, the fair Ysolt was here and was taken away by the Baron, was she not?"

"Yes!"

"Alas!" said the Knight, "I see no hope. Whilst I am poor, the Baron will never relent."

"Never!" chimed in Sir Agravaine.

"Is your poverty the only objection he has to you?" asked the Professor.

"Yes."

"Well," replied the Professor, "I can understand a father's feelings in such a case. It seems hard upon a young man, but naturally he wants his daughter to be comfortable. Is there nothing you can turn your hand to to improve your fortunes?"

"We might rob somebody," said Sir Agravaine, with a reflective air.

"Rob somebody!" exclaimed the Professor. "That is simply atrocious! Can't you go to work; go into business, start a factory, speculate in stocks, or something of that kind?"

"Persons of my degree never work," said Sir Bleoberis.

The Professor sighed, "Ah! I forgot. We must think of something else. Let me see; young man, I think I can help you a little, perhaps. You agree to accept some information from me and I believe I can make your fortune."

"Do you propose," asked Sir Agravaine, "to drug the Baron, or to enchant him so that he will change his mind? I have often tried love-philters with ladies whose hands I sought, but they always failed."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Professor. "I don't operate with such trumpery as that. You agree to help me, and we'll give this island such a stirring up as will revolutionize it."

The Professor then proceeded to explain in detail the nature and operation of some of the scientific

apparatus which he had with him in his trunk; and the Knight and the Hermit listened with open-eyed amazement while he told them of the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the photograph, and other modern inventions.

Whilst the Professor waxed eloquent, Sir Dinadan and Miss Baffin strolled slowly back towards the cave.

Sir Dinadan had improved the opportunity to offer Miss Baffin his hand, rather abruptly.

"But you can try to love me," he pleaded, as she, with much embarrassment but with gentleness, resisted his importunity.

"I can try, Sir Dinadan," she said, blushing, "but really I have known you for only a few moments. It is impossible for me now to have any affection for you."

"Will tomorrow be time enough?"

"No, no! I must have a much longer time than that."

"I will fight for you. We will get up a tournament and you will see how I can unhorse the bravest knights. If I knock over ten, will that make any difference in your feelings?"

"Not the slightest!"

"Fifteen?"

"You do not understand. It is not the custom in our country to press a suit upon a lady by poking people off of a horse."

"Perhaps I ought to fight your father? Will Sir Baffin break a lance with me to decide if I shall have you?"

"My father does not fight."

"Does not fight! Certainly you don't mean that?"

"He is the Vice-President of the Universal Peace Society."

"The WHAT?" asked Sir Dinadan, in amazement.

"Of the Peace Society; a society which opposes fighting of every kind, under any circumstances."

It was a moment or two before Sir Dinadan could get his breath. Then he said:

"But—but then, Lady Tilly, what—what do men in your country do with themselves?"

Miss Baffin laughed and endeavored to explain to him the modern methods of existence.

"I never could have believed such a thing from other lips," said Sir Dinadan. "It is marvelous. But tell me, how do lovers woo in your land?"

"Really, Sir Dinadan," replied Miss Baffin, blushing, "I have had no experience worth speaking of in such matters. I suppose, perhaps, they show a lady that they love her. and then wait until she can make up her mind."

"I will wait, then, as long as you wish."

"But," said Miss Baffin, shyly, although plainly she was beginning to feel a genuine interest in the proceeding, "your father and your mother may not think as you do; and then, I shall not want to stay upon this island if I can get away."

"My mother always consents to anything I wish, and the Baron never dares to oppose what she wants. And if you go back to your own country, I will go with you, whether you accept me or not."

Miss Baffin smiled. Sir Dinadan was in earnest, at any rate. She could not help thinking of the sensation that would be created in Connock if she should walk up Main street of the town some afternoon with Sir Dinadan in his parti-colored dress of doublet and stockings, and jaunty feathered cap, and sword, while his long yellow hair dangled about his shoulders.

While Sir Dinadan was protesting that he should love her for ever and for ever, they came back again to the Hermit's cell, and then Sir Dinadan, greeting Sir Bleoberis and Sir Agravaine, presented Miss Baffin to them.

Sir Bleoberis was courteous but somewhat indifferent; Sir Agravaine, upon the contrary, appeared to be deeply impressed with Miss Baffin's beauty. After gazing at her steadily for a few moments, he approached her, and while the other members of the company engaged in conversation, he said:

"Fair lady, you are not married?"

"No, sir," replied Miss Baffin, with some indignation.

"Permit me, then, to offer you my hand."

"What!" exclaimed Miss Baffin, becoming angry.

"I love you. Will you be mine?" said Sir Agravaine, falling upon one knee and trying to take her hand.

Miss Baffin boxed his ear with a degree of violence.

Rising with a rueful countenance, he said:

"Am I to understand, then, that you decline the offer?"

Miss Baffin, without replying, walked away from him and joined her father.

Sir Dinadan was asking the Hermit for a few simples with which to relieve the suffering of his noble mother.

"I judge, from what you say," returned the Professor, "that the Baroness is afflicted with lumbago. The Hermit's remedies, I fear, will be ineffectual. Permit me to recommend you to iron her noble back, and to apply a porous plaster."

Sir Dinadan wished to have the process more clearly explained. The Professor unfolded the matter in detail, and said:

"I have some plasters in my trunk, down there upon the beach."

"Then you are a leech?" asked Sir Dinadan.

"Matilda, my child," remarked the Professor, "observe that word 'leech' used by Sir Dinadan! How very interesting it is! Not exactly a leech, Sir Dinadan; but it is my habit to try to know a little of everything."

"Can you cast a lover's horoscope?" asked Sir Agravaine, looking at Matilda.

"Young man," said the Professor, sternly, "there is no such foolery as a horoscope; and as for love, you had better let it alone until you have more wit and a heavier purse."

"I wish you and the Lady Tilly to come with me to the castle," remarked Sir Dinadan. "My father will welcome you heartily if you can medicine the sickness of my mother; and she will be eager to receive your fair daughter."

"I will go, of course," replied the Professor; "you are very kind. Tilly, we had better accept, I think?"

Miss Baffin was willing to leave the matter wholly in the hands of her father.

After requesting Sir Dinadan to have his luggage brought up from the beach, the Professor bade adieu to the Hermit, and then turning to Sir Bleoberis, who stood with a disconsolate air by the fire, he said:

"I will see you again about your affair; and meantime you may depend upon my using my influence with the Baron to remove his prejudices. I will dance at your wedding yet; that is, figuratively speaking, of course; for, as a precise matter of fact, I do not know how to dance."

As the Professor and Sir Dinadan and Miss Baffin left the cell, Sir Agravaine approached the lady and whispered:

"Did I understand you to say you don't love me?" Miss Baffin twitched the skirt of her gown to one side in a scornful way, and passed on without replying.

"Women," sighed Sir Agravaine, as he looked mournfully after her, "are *so* incomprehensible. I wish I knew what she meant."

### THE CASTLE OF BARON BORS

As Sir Dinadan led the Professor and Miss Baffin along the lovely path which went winding through the woods toward the castle, the Professor lighted another cigar, and in response to Sir Dinadan, he entered upon an explanation of the nature of tobacco, the methods and extent of its use, and its effect upon the human system.

"The Lady Tilly, of course she smokes sometimes, also?" asked Sir Dinadan.

"Oh, no," replied Miss Baffin, "ladies in my country never do."

"Of course not," added the Professor.

"And yet, if it is so pleasing and so beneficial as you say," responded the youth, "why should not ladies attempt it?"

The Professor really could not say; Sir Dinadan was pressing him almost too closely. He compromised further discussion by yielding promptly, although with a melancholy reflection that his store of cigars was small, to a request to teach Sir Dinadan, at the earliest opportunity, to smoke.

As they neared the castle, the Professor's attention was absorbed in observing the details of the structure. It was a massive edifice of stone, having severe outlines and no ornamentation worthy of the name, but presenting, from the very grandeur of its proportions, an impressive and not unpleasing appearance. It was surrounded by a wide fosse filled with water; and the Professor was delighted to observe, as they drew near, that the entrance was protected with a portcullis and a drawbridge. The bridge was drawn up, and the iron portcullis, made of bars of huge size, was closed.

"Magnificent, isn't it, Tilly?" exclaimed the Professor, gleefully. "It is probably the most perfect specimen of early English architecture now upon earth. Most fortunately I have in my trunks a photographic apparatus with which to obtain a picture of it."

Sir Dinadan seized a curved horn which hung upon the branch of a tree, and blew a blast loud and long upon it.

The Professor regarded the performance with intense interest and not a little enthusiasm.

The warder of the castle appeared at the grating, and, perceiving Sir Dinadan, saluted him; then lowering the drawbridge and lifting the portcullis, which ascended with many hideous creaks and groans from the rusty iron, Sir Dinadan and his companions entered.

Leaving the Professor and Miss Baffin comfortably seated in a great hall, the walls of which were adorned with curious tapestries dark with age, with swords and axes and trophies of the chase, Sir Dinadan went in search of the Baron.

"Little did we think, Tilly," said the Professor, looking around, "when we left New York four weeks ago—it seems more like four years—that we should find ourselves, within a month, in such a place as this."

"I can hardly believe it yet," responded Miss Baffin.

"It does seem like a dream. And yet we are certainly wide awake, and we are in the hall of a real castle, waiting for real people to come to us."

"Sir Dinadan seems very real, too," said Miss Baffin, timidly.

"Very! There can be no doubt about it."

"And he behaves like a real young man, too," continued Miss Baffin. "He proposed to me this morning."

"What! Proposed to you! Incredible! Why, the boy has not known you more than an hour or two."

"He is a man, pa; not a boy," said Miss Baffin,

a little hurt. "It *was* rather sudden; but, then, genuine affection sometimes manifests itself in that way."

The Professor smiled; he perceived the exact situation of things. Then he looked very serious again. This was a contingency of which he had not taken account.

"Well, Tilly," he said, "I hardly know what to say about the matter. It is so completely unexpected. You didn't accept him?"

"No; not exactly, but——"

"Very well, then. We will leave the situation as it is for the present. When we have been here longer we can better determine what we should do."

Sir Dinadan entered with the Baron. The Baron greeted his guests with warmth, making no allusion to the occurrences in the Hermit's cell, and appearing, indeed, to have forgotten them.

"It is enough, sir, and fair damsel, that misfortune has thrown you upon our shores. You shall make this your home while you live."

"A thousand thanks," responded the Professor.

"I cherish the belief that I can be of service to you. By the way, may I ask how is the noble Lady Bors?"

"Suffering greatly. My son tells me you are a wise leech, and can give her release from her pain."

"I hope I can. If you will permit my daughter, here, to see the lady and to follow my directions, we may be able to help her."

"There," said the Baron, waving his hand, "are your apartments. When you have made ready we will summon you to our banquet."

"Your property, which was upon the beach, will be placed before you very soon," said Sir Dinadan.

The Professor and Miss Baffin entered the rooms, and the Baron withdrew with his son.

When the trunks came and were opened, the guests arrayed themselves in their finest costumes, and Miss Baffin contrived to give to her beauty a bewildering effect by an artistic arrangement of frippery, which received its consummation when she placed some lovely artificial flowers in her hair.

Then the Professor, giving her certain plasters and a soothing drug or two, requested a servant, who stood outside the door, to announce to Lady Bors that Miss Baffin was ready to give her treatment.

Sir Dinadan came forward and gallantly escorted Miss Baffin to his mother's room; where, after presenting her, he left her and returned to the Professor.

The young man led the Professor about the castle, showing him its apartments, its furniture and decorations, with an earnest purpose to try to find favor in the eyes of the father of the woman he loved. The Professor, for his part, was charmed with his companion, and his interest in the castle and its appurtenances increased every moment.

"This," said Sir Dinadan, pausing before a large oaken door, barred with iron, "is the portal to the upper room of the south tower. In this chamber the Baron has confined Ysolt, my sister, until she consents to think no more of Sir Bleoberis."

"Locked her up, has he? That seems hard."

"Cruel, is it not?"

"You favor the suit of the Knight, do you?" inquired the Professor.

"I would let Ysolt choose for herself. He is a worthy man; but he has poverty."

"We must try to help him," said the Professor.

"You would act differently in such a case; would you not?" asked Sir Dinadan, rather eagerly.

"Why, yes, of course; that is, I mean," said the Professor, suddenly recollecting himself, and what Miss Baffin had told him, "I mean, I would think about it. I would give the matter thoughtful consideration."

Sir Dinadan sighed, and asked the Professor if he would come with him to the dining-hall.

It was a noble room. As the Professor entered it with Sir Dinadan, as he looked at the vast fireplace filled with burning logs, because the air of the castle was chilly even in summer time, at the rudely carved beams that traversed the ceiling, at the quaint curtains and curious ornaments upon the walls, at the long table which stretched across the floor and bore upon its polished surface a multitude of vessels of strange and often fantastic shapes, he could hardly believe his senses. These things, this method of existence, he had read about myriads of times, but they had never seemed very real to him until he encountered them here face to face.

These people among whom he had come by such strange mischance actually lived and moved here, amid these scenes, and they were as common and as prosy to them as the scenes in his own home in the little enclosure hard by the walls of the university building at Balligomingo.

It was that home and its equipment that seemed strange and incongruous to him now. As he thought about it, he felt that he should experience an actual nervous shock if he should suddenly be plumped down in his own library. Very oddly, as his mind reverted to the subject, his memory recalled with peculiarly vivid distinctness an old and faded dressing-gown in which he used to come to breakfast; and a blue cream-jug with a broken handle, which used to be placed before him at the meal.

It seemed to him that the dressing-gown and the defective jug were as far back in the misty past as such a social condition as that with which he had now been brought into contact would have seemed if he had thought of it a month ago.

As the servants entered, bearing the viands upon large dishes, the Baron made his appearance at the upper end of the room, and a moment later Lady Bors walked slowly in, leaning upon the arm of Miss Baffin.

"Your sweet daughter," she said, when the Professor had been presented to her, "has eased my pain already. I think she must be an angel sent to me by Heaven."

"She *is* an angel," said Sir Dinadan, emphatically, so that his mother looked at him curiously. Miss Baffin blushed.

"Angels, my lady, do not come with porous plasters," said the Professor, smiling.

"I love her already, whether she is angel or woman," replied Lady Bors, patting Miss Baffin's arm.

"So do—" Sir Dinadan did not complete the sentence. It occurred to him that he might perhaps be getting a little too demonstrative.

"The Lady Tilly," said the Baroness, "has told me something of the adventure which brought you here. Will you be so courteous as to tell us more, and to inform us of that strange and wonderful land from which you have come?"

"Willingly, madam," replied the Professor. And so, while the meal was in progress, the Professor—not neglecting the food, for he was really hungry—tried, in the plainest language he could command, to convey to the minds of his hearers some notion of the marvels of modern civilization. The Baron, Lady Bors, and Sir Dinadan asked many questions, and they more than once expressed the greatest astonishment at the revelations made in the Professor's narrative.

"I will show you some of these wonders," said Professor Baffin. "Most happily I have with me in my trunks quite a number of instruments, such as those I have told you of."

"In your trunks!" exclaimed the Baron. "You do not wear trunks, as we do?"

The Professor at once explained the misapprehension. When he had done, there was heard in the room the twanging of the strings of a rude musical instrument.

"It is the minstrel," said Sir Dinadan, as the Professor and Miss Baffin looked around.

The Professor was delighted.

"He is going to sing," said the Baron.

The bard, after a few preliminary thrums upon an imbecile harp, burst into song. He occupied several moments in reciting a ballad of chivalry, and although his manner was dramatic, his voice was sadly cracked and out of tune.

"Tilly," said the Professor, "remember to note in your journal that the musical system here is constructed from a defective minor scale, with incorrect intervals. I observed precisely the same characteristics in the song that our Irish nurse, Mary, used to put you to sleep with when you were a baby. I stood outside the chamber door one night, and wrote the strain down as she sang it. This proves that it is very ancient."

"You like the song, then?" asked the Baron.

"It is very interesting, indeed—very!" replied the Professor. "I think we shall obtain a great deal of valuable information here. No, Tilly, you had better refuse it," said the Professor, observing that Sir Dinadan, who appeared to be animated by a resolute purpose to stuff Miss Baffin, was pressing another dish upon her, "you will spoil your night's rest."

"Do you sing, Sir Baffin?" inquired Lady Bors.

"Never in company, my lady," replied the Professor; "my vocalization would excite too much alarm."

The Baron and his wife manifestly did not comprehend the pleasantry.

"My daughter sings very nicely; but you can hear her sing without her lips being opened. Excuse me for a moment."

The Professor went to his apartment, and presently returned, bringing with him a phonograph. Placing it upon the table, he turned the crank. From the funnel at once issued a lovely soprano voice, singing, with exquisite enunciation and inflection, a song, every word of which was heard by the listeners.

Lady Bors looked scared, Sir Dinadan crossed himself, the Baron eyed the Professor doubtfully, the minstrel over in the corner laid down his harp, and relieved his overcharged feelings by bursting into tears, which he wiped away with the sleeve of his tunic.

"It must be magic," said the Baron, at last; "no mere man could hide an angelic spirit in such a place and compel it to sing."

"Allow me to explain," said the Professor; and then he unfolded the mechanism, and showed the method of its operation. "My daughter sang up several songs for me before we left home. They were stored away here for future use. Tilly, my love, sing something, so that our friends can perceive that it is the same voice."

Miss Baffin, after some hesitation, began "The Last Rose of Summer." While she sang, Sir Dinadan looked at her with rapture depicted on his countenance. When she had done he reflected for an instant, and then, rising and walking over to the place where the minstrel sat, he seized by the ear that unfortunate operator with defective minor scales, and, leading him to the door, he kicked him into the hall.

This appeared to relieve Sir Dinadan's feelings.

When he returned, the Professor persuaded him to have his voice recorded by the phonograph; and by the time the Baron and Lady Bors had also tried the experiment, the faith of the family in the powers of Professor Baffin had risen to such a pitch that the Baron would have been almost ready to lay wagers in favor of his omnipotence.

The Professor that evening accepted for himself and his daughter a very urgent invitation to make the castle their home, at least until Fate and the future should determine if they were to remain permanently upon the island. The chance that they would ever escape seemed indeed exceedingly slender; and the Professor resolved to accept the promise with philosophical resignation.

He employed much of his time during the first weeks that he was the Baron's guest in making the Baron familiar with some of the wonders of modern discovery and invention. The Baron also was deeply interested in an exhibition given by the Professor of the powers of his patent india-rubber life-raft, which the Professor brought up from the beach folded into a small bundle. After inflating it, to the amazement of the spectators, he put it into the fosse that surrounded the castle and paddled about upon it. The raft was allowed to remain in the ditch ready for use.

The Professor often went outside the castle walls to talk with Sir Bleoberis, and to comfort him. The Professor explained the telegraph and the locomotive to the Knight; and when the Knight assured

him that the armorers of the island could make the machinery that would be required, if they should receive suitable instructions, the Professor arranged to build a short railroad line and a telegraph line in partnership with Sir Bleoberis, if the latter would obtain the necessary concession from King Brandegore. Professor Baffin was of the opinion that the Knight, by such means, might ultimately acquire great wealth.

Meantime Sir Dagonet had been seen several times of late in the vicinity of the castle, and once he had made again a formal demand upon the Baron for Ysolt's hand. This the Baron refused, whereupon Sir Dagonet returned an insolent reply that he would have her in spite of her father's objection. The Professor sincerely pitied both Ysolt and Sir Bleoberis, but as the Baron always became violently angry when the suffering of the lovers was alluded to, the Professor disliked to plead their cause.

It occurred to him, however, one day that there could be no possible harm in arranging to permit the forlorn creatures to converse with each other; and so, with the help of Miss Baffin, who was allowed to enter the captive's room, he fixed up a telephone, the machinery of which he had in one of his trunks, with a wire running from Ysolt's window to a point some distance beyond the castle wall.

The battery with which the instruments were supplied was placed in an iron box furnished by Sir Bleoberis, and hidden behind a huge oak tree.

The lovers were delighted with the telephone and its performances; but the Professor's ingenious kindness caused him a great deal of serious trouble.

It seems that Miss Baffin one morning had been showing her father's umbrella to Ysolt, and making her acquainted with its peculiarities and uses.

When Miss Baffin had withdrawn, Sir Bleoberis began to breathe through the telephone protestations of his undying love, and finally he appealed to Ysolt to fly with him. Of course he expected nothing to come of this appeal, for he had not the slightest conception of any method by which Ysolt could escape from her prison. He merely threw it in, in a general sort of a way, as an expression of the intensity of his affection.

But it suggested to the mind of Ysolt an ingenious thought; and she responded through the telephone that if Sir Bleoberis would keep out of sight and have his gallant steed ready, she would join him in a few moments. The Knight's heart beat so fiercely at this news that it fairly made his armor vibrate.

Obeying the orders of Ysolt, he went behind the oak and sat upon the iron box containing the Professor's battery and electrical apparatus.

Ysolt's window was but twenty feet from the surface of the water in the fosse. Directly beneath it, by a most fortunate chance, floated the life-raft of Professor Baffin. The brave girl, climbing upon the stone sill of the window, hoisted the umbrella, and sailing swiftly downward through the air, she alighted safely upon the raft. A single push upon the wall sent it to the further side of the ditch, whereupon Ysolt leaped ashore, unperceived by the warder or by any one in the castle.

A moment more, and seated upon the steed of her cavalier, with his strong arm around her, she would be flying to peace and happiness and love's sweet fulfilment, far, far beyond the reach of the angry Baron's power.

But, alas, human life is so full of mischances! As Ysolt neared the great oak behind which her lover sat, Sir Dagonet came riding carelessly across the lawn. Seeing her he spurred his horse forward, and, right before the eyes of Sir Bleoberis, he grasped her by the arm, tossed her to his saddle and dashed away across the country.

But why did not Sir Bleoberis leap to the rescue?

Sir Bleoberis tried with all his might to do so; but he had on a full suit of steel armor, and the Professor's battery, by some means even yet unexplained, so charged the cover of the box with magnetism that it held the Knight close down. He could not move a muscle of his legs. He writhed and twisted and expressed his fury in language that was vehement and scandalous; but the Professor's infamous machine held him fast; and he was compelled to sit by, imbecile and raging, while the wind bore to his ears the heart-rending screams of his sweetheart as she cried to him to come and save her from an awful fate.

The shrieks of the unhappy Ysolt penetrated to the castle, and at once the Baron ran out, followed by Sir Dinadan, Professor Baffin, and a host of the Baron's retainers, all of them armed and ready for war. The first act of the Professor was to capture his expanded umbrella, which was being blown about

wildly by the wind. Furling it, he proceeded to the place where Sir Bleoberis sat, trying to explain to the infuriated Baron what had happened.

"There!" said Sir Bleoberis, savagely, pointing to the Professor, "is the vile wretch that did it all! Seize him! He, he alone is to blame."

The Professor was amazed.

"Yes!" exclaimed Sir Bleoberis, "it was he who persuaded the fair Ysolt to leap from the window; it was he who notified Sir Dagonet, and it is his wicked enchantment that held me here so that I could not fly to her succor. I cannot even get up now."

"The man," said the Professor to the Baron, "appears to be suffering from intellectual aberration. I can't imagine what he means. Why don't you rise?"

"You, foul wizard, know that I am held here by your infernal power!"

"Try to be calm," said the Professor, soothingly. "Your expressions are too strong. Let me see—. Why, bless my soul, the electrical current has magnetized the box. There, now," said the Professor as he snipped a couple of the wires, "try it again."

Sir Bleoberis arose without effort. Baron Bors stepped forward and said sternly:

"What, you, Sir Bleoberis, were doing here I do not know. I suspect you of evil purposes. But it is clear you had nothing to do with the seizure of my daughter, if, indeed, she has been carried off by Sir Dagonet. You may go. But as for you," shouted the Baron, turning to the Professor, "I perceive that

your devilish arts have been used against me and my family while you have been eating my bread. The world shall no longer be burdened by such a monster. Away with him to the scaffold!"

"This," said the Professor, as the perspiration stood in beads upon his pallid face, "is painful; very painful. Allow me to explain. The fact is I——"

"Away!" said the Baron, with an impatient gesture. "Off with his head as quickly as possible!"

"But, my dear sir," contended the Professor, as the Baron's retainers seized him, "this is simply awful! No court, no jury, no trial, no chance to tell my story! It is not just. It is not fair play. Permit me, for one moment, to——"

"To the block with him!" screamed the Baron. "Have no more parley about it!"

Sir Bleoberis came forward.

"Sir Bors," he said, "this, in a measure, is my quarrel. It falls to me by right to punish this wretch. Will you permit me?" and then Sir Bleoberis struck the Professor in the face with his mailed gauntlet.

Professor Baffin would have assailed him upon the spot, but for the fact that he was a captive.

"He means that you shall fight him," said Sir Dinadan, who retained his faith in the Professor, remembering his own affection for Miss Baffin.

"Certainly I will," said the Professor. "Where, and when, and how? I should like to have it out right here on the spot."

It is melancholy to think what would have been the sorrow of the members of the Universal Peace

Society, of which the Professor was the first vice-president, if they could have observed the eagerness with which that good man seemed to long for the fray, and the fiery rage which beamed from his eyes until the sparks almost appeared to fly from his spectacles.

Miss Baffin at this moment rushed upon the scene, and in wild affright flung her arms about her father.

"The contest shall be made," said the Baron sternly. "Unhand him!"

The Professor hurriedly explained the matter to Matilda, who sobbed piteously.

"You shall have my armor, my horse, and my lance," said Sir Dinadan in a kindly voice to the Professor. "Go and get them," he continued, speaking to some of the servants.

"Thank you," said the Professor. "I am much obliged. You are a fine young man."

"But, pa," said Miss Baffin through her tears, "surely you are not going to fight?"

"Yes, my love."

"And you a member of the Peace Society, too."

"I can't help it, my child. You may omit to note this extraordinary occurrence in your journal. The Society may as well remain in ignorance of it. But I must conform to the customs of the place."

"How can you ever do anything upon a horse, with armor and a lance? It is dreadful!"

"No, my child, it may perhaps be regarded as fortunate. For many years I have longed to observe the practices of ancient chivalry more closely; that opportunity has now come. I am about to have actual practical experience with them."

Miss Baffin wiped her eyes as Sir Dinadan came to her side and tried to comfort her. Sir Agravaine, who had ridden up during the excitement, dismounted when he saw Miss Baffin, and pulling Sir Dinadan by the sleeve, he whispered:

"You are acquainted with that lady?"

"Yes."

"Would you mind ascertaining for me if I am to understand her remarkable conduct to me as tantamount to a refusal? I don't want to trouble you, but——"

Sir Dinadan turned abruptly away, leaving Sir Agravaine still involved in doubt.

When the armor came, Sir Dinadan helped the Professor to put it on. It was a size or two too large for him, and the Professor had a considerable amount of difficulty in adjusting the pieces properly, but, with the help of Sir Dinadan, he at last succeeded.

"Bring me my lance!" he exclaimed, with a firm voice, as he stepped forward.

"It is here," said Sir Dinadan.

"Farewell, my child," said the Professor to Miss Baffin, making a futile attempt to bend his elbows so that he could embrace her. "Farewell!" and the Professor tried to kiss her, but he merely succeeded in injuring her nose with the visor of his helmet.

"Oh, pa!" said Miss Baffin, weeping, "if you should be killed."

"No danger of that, love; none at all. I am perfectly safe. I feel exactly as if I were a cooking-stove, to be sure; but you may depend upon my

giving a good account of myself. And now, dear, adieu! Ho, there!" exclaimed the Professor, with faint reminiscences of the tragic stage coming into his mind. "Bring me my steed!"

The determined efforts of four muscular men were required to mount the Professor upon his horse. And when he was fairly astride, with his lance in his hand, he felt as if he weighed at least three thousand pounds, and the weapon seemed quite as large as the jib-boom of the "Morning Star."

The warrior did his best to sit his horse gracefully; but the miserable beast pranced and curveted in such a very unreasonable manner that his spectacles were continually shaking loose, and in his efforts to fix them, and at the same time to hold his horse, he lost control of his lance, and came near impaling two or three of the spectators.

Sir Dinadan's own groom then took the bridle-rein, and leading the horse quietly to the jousting-ground put him in place directly opposite to Sir Bleoberis, whose lance was in rest, and who evidently intended to spit the Professor through and through at the first encounter.

The Professor really felt uncomfortably at a disadvantage in his iron-clad condition, and he began to think that the sports and combats of the olden time were perhaps not so interesting after all, when brought within the range of practical experience.

Suddenly the herald's trumpet sounded a blast. The Professor had not the least notion of the meaning of the sound, but Sir Bleoberis started promptly towards him, and the Professor's horse, trained at

jousting, also started. The Professor was not quite ready, and he pulled the rein hard while trying to fix his lance in its rest. This caused the horse to swerve sharply around, whereupon the warrior's spectacles came off, and the horse dashed at full speed to the side of the jousting-ground, bringing the half-blinded Professor's lance up against a tree, into which the point stuck fast. The Professor was hurled with some violence to the ground, and the horse ran away.

When they picked him up and unlatched his helmet, he was bleeding at the nose.

"It is of no consequence, Matilda, of no consequence, I assure you," he said. "I am shaken up a little, but not hurt. I think, perhaps, I need practice at this kind of thing."

The Professor, while speaking, felt about him in a bewildered way for the pocket in which he was used to keep his handkerchief. But as the armor baffled his efforts to find it, Miss Baffin offered him her kerchief with which to stanch the blood.

"The ancients, Matilda," said the Professor, as he pressed the handkerchief to his nose, "must have possessed great physical strength, and they could not have been near-sighted. By the way, where are my glasses?"

Sir Dinadan handed them to him.

"You will not attempt to get on that horrid horse, again, pa, will you?" said Miss Baffin, entreatingly.

"I think not, my child, unless I am forced to do so. Jousting is interesting to read about; but as a matter of fact it is brutal. I think, Sir Dinadan, I

should be more comfortable if I could get this cast-iron overcoat off, so that I could move my elbows without creaking."

Sir Dinadan helped him to remove his armor, and said:

"My noble mother has insisted that Sir Bleoberis shall not fight with you, and the Baron has yielded to her wish."

"How can I thank you?" exclaimed Miss Baffin.

Sir Dinadan looked at her as if he would like to tell her how, if he dared venture. But he only said:

"I deserve no thanks. My mother is upon your side and that of your father. She asks me to bring him to her."

The Baron was with his wife, and Sir Bleoberis stood before them.

"Sir Baffin," said the Baron, "Lady Bors insists that you are innocent of any wrong-doing; and Sir Bleoberis, seeing that you are unskilled, has resolved not to have a combat with you. I am willing to pardon you upon one condition: that you find my daughter and bring her back to me."

"That I should be willing to try to do under any circumstances," said the Professor. "I regret her loss very deeply. But, you see, I know nothing of the country. I am afraid I should not discover her if I should go alone."

"I will go with you," said Sir Bleoberis.

"That is first-rate," said the Professor. "Give me your hand."

"We will keep your daughter in the castle as a hostage," said the Baron. "When you return with

Ysolt you shall have the Lady Tilly, and Sir Bleoberis shall have Ysolt."

"I am profoundly grateful," replied Sir Bleoberis, bowing.

"My dear," said the Professor to Miss Baffin, "does the arrangement suit you?"

"It suits me," muttered Sir Dinadan.

"I must stay whether I wish to or not," replied Miss Baffin. "But I shall worry about you every moment while you are gone."

"Sir Dinadan may be able to soothe her," said Sir Bleoberis, with a smile.

"I think I could, if I were allowed to try," insinuated Sir Agravaine.

"I charge Sir Dinadan and his noble parents with the task," said the Professor.

The entire party, with the exception of Sir Agravaine, then returned to the castle, so that the Professor could make ready for the journey.

### THE RESCUE

Professor Baffin politely declined to wear the armor of Sir Dinadan upon the journey. He packed a few things in a satchel, and putting his revolver in his pocket, he bade adieu to his daughter and the members of the Baron's family. Mounting his horse by the side of Sir Bleoberis, who rode in full armor, the two trotted briskly out through the woods to the roadway, which ran by not far from the castle.

"Where shall we go to look for the lady?" asked the Professor, as the Knight started down the road at a rapid pace.

"The villain, no doubt, has carried her captive to his castle. We shall seek her there."

"How are we going to get her out? I have had very little experience, personally, in storming castles."

"We shall have to devise some plan when we get there," replied the Knight. "The castle, unhappily, is upon an island in the middle of the lake."

"And I can't swim," said the Professor.

"Perhaps the King will give us help. It is close to the place where he holds his court."

The Professor began to think that the case looked exceedingly umpromising. He lapsed into silence, thinking over the probable results of the failure of his mission; and as the Knight appeared to be absorbed in his own reflections, the pair rode forward without engaging in further conversation.

Professor Baffin did not fail to notice the extreme loveliness of the country through which they were passing. It presented all the characteristics of a perfect English landscape; but he observed that it was not fully cultivated, and that the agricultural methods employed were of a very primitive kind.

After an hour's ride, the two horsemen entered a wood. Hardly had they done so before they heard, near to them, the voice of a woman crying loudly for help. Sir Bleoberis at once spurred his horse forward, and the Professor followed close behind him.

Presently they perceived a Knight in armor endeavoring to hold upon the horse in front of him a young woman of handsome appearance, who screamed loudly as she attempted to release herself from his grasp.

"Drop her!" exclaimed the Professor in an excited manner, and drawing his revolver, "put her down; let her go at once!"

The Knight turned, and seeing the intruders he released the maiden, and leveling his lance, made straight for Sir Bleoberis at full gallop.

The lady, white with terror, flew to the Professor, and reposed her head upon his bosom.

Professor Baffin was embarrassed. He had no idea what he had better do or say. He could not repulse the poor creature; and as the situation, upon the whole, was not positively disagreeable, he permitted her to remain, sobbing upon his bosom, while he watched the fight and dried her eyes, in a fatherly way, with his handkerchief.

The two Knights came together with a terrible shock which made the sparks fly; but neither was unhorsed or injured, and the lances of both glanced aside. They turned, and made at each other again. This time the lance of each pierced the armor of the other, so that neither lance could be withdrawn. It really seemed as if the two Knights would have to undress and to walk off, leaving their armor pinioned together. A moment later the strange Knight fell to the ground, and lay perfectly still. The Professor went up to him and taking his lance from his hand, so that Sir Bleoberis could move, unlaced the Knight's helmet.

He was dead.

The Professor was inexpressibly shocked. "Why," he exclaimed, "the man is dead! Most horrible, isn't it?"

"Oh, no," said Sir Bleoberis, coolly. "I tried to kill him."

"You wanted to murder him?"

"Oh, yes, of course."

"I am so glad you did," exclaimed the damsel with a sweet smile. "How can I thank you? And you, my dear preserver."

"Bless my soul, madam," exclaimed the Professor, "I had nothing to do with it. I consider it perfectly horrible."

Turning to Sir Bleoberis, the maiden said, "It was you who fought, but it was this brave and wise man who brought you here, was it not?"

"Yes," said Sir Bleoberis, smiling.

"I knew it," exclaimed the lady, flinging her arms around the Professor's neck. "I can never repay you—never, never, excepting with a life of devotion."

The Professor began to feel warm. Disengaging himself as speedily as possible, he said:

"Of course, madam, I am very glad you have been rescued—very. But I deeply regret that the Knight over there was slain. What," asked the Professor of Sir Bleoberis, "will you do with him?"

"Let him lie. He is of no further use."

"I never heard of anything so shocking," said Professor Baffin. "And how are we to dispose of this lady?"

"I will go with you," exclaimed the damsel, looking eagerly at the Professor. "Let me tell you my story. My name is Bragwaine. I am the daughter of the Prince Sagramor. That dead Knight found me, a few hours ago, walking in the park by my

father's castle. Sir Lamorak, he was called. Riding up swiftly to me, he seized me, and carried me away. He brought me, despite my screams and struggles, to this place, where you found us both. I should now be a captive in his castle but for you."

Bragwaine seemed about to fall upon the Professor's neck again, but he pretended to stumble, and retreated to a safe distance.

"Is there much of this kind of thing going on—this business of galloping off with marriageable girls?" asked the Professor.

"Oh yes," said Sir Bleoberis.

"I thought so," said the Professor; "this is the second case I have encountered today. We shall most likely have quite a collection of rescued damsels on our hands by the time we get back home. It is interesting, but embarrassing."

"I know Prince Sagramor," said Sir Bleoberis to Bragwaine. "We are going to the court, and will take you to your father."

"*You* will take me, Sir—Sir——"

"Sir Baffin," explained Sir Bleoberis.

"Sir Baffin, will you not?"

"You can have my horse. I will walk."

"I will ride upon your horse with you, and you shall hold me on," said Bragwaine.

"That is the custom," said Bleoberis.

"But," exclaimed the Professor with an air of distress, "I am not used to riding double. I doubt if I can manage the horse and hold you on at the same time."

"You need not hold me," said Bragwaine laughingly; "I will hold fast to you. I shall not fall."

"But then——"

"I *will* go with you," said Bragwaine almost tearfully. "You won me from the hands of that villain, Lamorak, and I am not so ungrateful as to leave you to cling to another person."

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed the Professor, "this certainly is a very curious situation for a man like me to find himself in. However, I will do the best I can."

Professor Baffin mounted his steed, and then Sir Bleoberis swung the fair Bragwaine up to a place on the saddle in front of the Professor. Bragwaine clutched his coat-sleeve tightly; and although the Professor felt that there was no real necessity that she should attempt to preserve her equipoise by pressing his shoulder strongly with her head, he regarded the arrangement without very intense indignation.

He found that he could ride very comfortably with two in the saddle, but he felt that his attention could be given more effectively to the management of the horse if Bragwaine would stop turning her eyes up to his in that distracting manner so frequently.

They rode along in silence for awhile. Suddenly Bragwaine said:

"Sir Baffin?"

"Well; what?"

"Are you married?"

Professor Baffin hardly knew what answer he had better give. After hesitating for a moment, he said:

"I have been."

"Then your wife is dead?"

The Professor could not lie. He had to say "Yes!"

"I am so glad," murmured Bragwaine. "Not that she is dead, but that you are free."

Professor Baffin was afraid to ask why. He felt that matters were becoming serious.

"And the reason is," continued Bragwaine, "that I have learned to love you better than I love any other one on earth!"

She said this calmly, very modestly, and quite as if it were a matter of course.

The Professor in astonishment looked at Sir Bleoberis, who had heard Bragwaine's words. The Knight nodded to him pleasantly, and said, "I expected this."

Evidently it was not an unusual thing for ladies so to express their feelings.

The somewhat bewildered Sir Baffin then said, "Well, my dear child, it is very kind indeed for you to regard me in that manner. I have done nothing to deserve it."

"You are my rescuer, my benefactor, my heart's idol!"

"Persons at my time of life," said the Professor, blushing, "have to be extremely careful. I will be a father to you, of course! Oh, certainly, you may count upon me being a father to you, right along."

"I do not mean that I love you as a daughter. You must marry me; you dear Sir Baffin." Then she actually patted his cheek.

Professor Baffin could feel the cold perspiration trickling down his back.

"I think," he said to Sir Bleoberis, "that this is, everything considered, altogether *the* most stupendous combination of circumstances that ever came within the range of my observation. It is positively distressing."

"You will break my heart if you will not love me," said Bragwaine, as if she were going to cry.

"Well, well," replied the bewildered Professor, "we can consider the subject at some other time. Your father, you know, might have other views, and——"

"The Prince, my father, will overwhelm you with gratitude for saving me. I know he will approve of our marriage. I will persuade him to have you knighted, and to secure for you some high place at court."

"That," said the Professor, "would probably make me acutely miserable for life."

Within an hour or two after the fight with Sir Lamorak, the Professor and his companions drew near to Callion, the town in which King Brandegore held his court.

Just before entering it they encountered Prince Sagramor coming out with a retinue of knights in pursuit of Sir Lamorak and his daughter. Naturally he was filled with joy at finding that she had been rescued and brought back to him.

After embracing her, he greeted Sir Bleoberis and the Professor warmly, thanking them for the service they had done to him. Bragwaine insisted upon the Professor's especial title to gratitude, and when she had told with eloquence of his wisdom and his valor, and had added to her story Sir Bleoberiss'

explanation of the Professor's adventures, the Prince saluted the latter, and said:

"There is only one way in which I can honor you, Sir Baffin. I perceive that already you have won the heart of this damsel. I had intended her for another. But she is fairly yours. Take her, gallant sir, and with her a loving father's blessing!"

Bragwaine wept for happiness.

"But, your highness, if I might be permitted to explain—" stammered the Professor.

"I know!" replied the Prince. "You will perhaps say you are poor. It is nothing. I will make you rich. It is enough for me that she loves you, and that you return it."

"I cannot sufficiently thank you for your kindness," said the Professor, "but really there is a——"

"If you are not noble, the King will cure that. He wants such brave men as you are in his service," said the Prince.

"I am a free-born American citizen, and the equal of any man on earth," said the Professor proudly, "but to tell you the honest truth, I——"

"You are not already married?" inquired the Prince, somewhat suspiciously.

"I have been married; my wife is dead, and——"

"Then, of course, you can marry Bragwaine. Sir Colgrevance," said the Prince to one of his attendants, "ride over and tell the abbot that Bragwaine will wish to be married tomorrow!"

"Tomorrow!" shrieked the Professor. "I really must protest; you are much too sudden. I have an important mission to fulfil, and I must attend to that first, and at once."

Sir Bleoberis explained to the Prince the nature of their errand, and told him the Professor's daughter was held as a hostage until he should bring Ysolt back to Baron Bors.

"We will delay the wedding, then," said the Prince. "And now, let us ride homeward."

If it had not been for the heart-rending manner in which everybody regarded him as the future husband of Bragwaine, and for the extreme tenderness of that lady's behavior toward him, the Professor would have enjoyed hugely his sojourn at the court. King Brandegore regarded him from the first with high favor, and the sovereign's conduct of course sufficed to recommend the Professor to everybody else. The Professor found the King to be a man of rather large mind, and it was a continual source of pleasure to the learned man to unfold to the King, who listened with amazement and admiration, the wonders of modern invention, science and discovery.

With what instruments the Professor's ingenuity could construct from the rude materials at hand; he showed a number of experiments, chiefly electrical, which so affected the King that he ordered the regular court magician to be executed as a perfectly hopeless humbug; but Professor Baffin's energetic protest saved the unhappy conjurer from so sad a fate.

An extemporized telegraph line, a few hundred yards in length, impressed the King more strongly than any other thing, and not only did he make to Sir Bleoberis and the Professor exclusive concessions

of the right to build lines within his dominions, but he promised to organize, at an early day, a raid upon a neighboring sovereign, for the purpose of obtaining plunder enough to give to the enterprise a handsome subsidy.

Sir Dagonet did not come to court during the Professor's stay. But there, in full view of the palace, a mile away in the lake, was his castle, and in that castle was the lovely Ysolt.

The Professor examined the building frequently through his field-glasses, which, by the way, the King regarded with unspeakable admiration; and more than once he thought he could distinguish Ysolt sitting by the window of one of the towers overlooking the lake.

The King several times sent to Sir Dagonet messages commanding Sir Dagonet to bring the damsel to him, but as Sir Dagonet invariably responded by trying to brain the messenger or to sink his boat, the King was forced to give it up as a hopeless case. Storming the castle was out of the question. None of the available boats was large enough to carry more than half a dozen men, and Sir Dagonet had many boats of great size which he could man, so as to assail any hostile fleet before it came beneath the castle wall.

But the Professor had a plan of his own, which he was working out in secret, while he waited. Sir Bleoberis had procured several skilful armorers, and under the directions of the Professor they undertook to construct, in rather a crude fashion, a small steam engine. This, when the parts were completed,

was fitted into a boat with a propeller screw, and when the craft was launched upon the lake, the Professor was delighted to find that it worked very nicely. The trial-trip was made at night, so that the secret of the existence of such a vessel might be kept from any of the friends of Sir Dagonet who might be loitering about.

It devolved upon Sir Bleoberis, by bribing a servant of Sir Dagonet's who came ashore, to send a message to Ysolt. She was ordered to watch at a given hour upon a certain night for a signal which should be given from a boat, beneath her window, and then to leap fearlessly into the water.

The night chosen was to be the eve of the Professor's wedding day. The more Prince Sagramor saw of Professor Baffin and his feats, the more strongly did he admire him; and in order to make provision against any accident which should deprive his daughter of marriage with so remarkable a man, the Prince commanded the wedding day to be fixed positively, despite the remonstrances which the Professor offered somewhat timidly, in view of the extreme delicacy of the matter.

Upon the night in question, the Professor, at the request of the King, who was very curious to have an opportunity to learn from practical experience the nature of the thing which the Professor called "a lecture," undertook to deliver in the dining-room of the palace the lecture upon Sociology, which he had prepared for his course in England.

The room was packed, and the interest and curiosity at first manifested were intense; but the Pro-

fessor spoke for an hour and three-quarters, losing his place several times because of the wretched character of the lights, and when he had concluded, he was surprised to discover that his entire audience was sound asleep.

At first he felt rather annoyed, but in an instant he perceived that chance had arranged matters in an extremely favorable manner.

It was within precisely half an hour of the time when he was to be in the boat under the window of Ysolt.

Stepping softly from the platform, he went upon tiptoe from the room. Not a sleeper awoke. Hurrying from the palace to the shore, he found Sir Bleoberis sitting in the boat, and awaiting him with impatience.

The Professor entered the craft, and applying a lighted match to the wood beneath the boiler, he pushed the boat away from the shore, and waited until he could get steam enough to move with.

A few moments sufficed for this, and then, opening the throttle-valve gently, the tiny steamer sailed swiftly over the bosom of the lake, through the intense darkness, until the wall of the castle, dark and gloomy, loomed up directly ahead.

A light was faintly burning in Ysolt's chamber in the tower, and the casement was open.

As the prow of the boat lightly touched the stones of the wall and rested, Sir Bleoberis softly whistled.

"I have always been uncertain," said the Professor to himself, "if the ancients knew how to whistle. This seems to indicate that they did know

how. It is extremely interesting. I must remember to tell Tilly to note it in her journal."

In response to the signal, a head appeared at the casement, and a soft, sweet voice said:

"Is that you, darling?"

"Yes, yes, it is I," replied Sir Bleoberis. "Oh, my love! my Ysolt!" he exclaimed, in an ecstasy.

"Is Sir Baffin there, too?"

"Yes. We are both here; and we have a swift boat. Come to me at once, dear love, that we may fly with you homeward."

"I am not quite ready, love," replied Ysolt. "Will not you wait for a moment?"

"It is important," said the Professor, "that we should act quickly."

"But I *must* fix up my hair," returned Ysolt. "I will hurry as much as I can."

"Women," said the Professor to his companion, "are all alike. She would rather remain in prison for life than come out with her hair mussed."

The occupants of the boat waited very impatiently for fifteen or twenty minutes. Then Ysolt, coming again to the window, said:

"Are you there, dearest?"

"Yes," replied Sir Bleoberis, eagerly. "We are all ready."

"And there's no time to lose," added Professor Baffin.

"Is your hair fixed?" asked the Knight.

"Oh, yes," said Ysolt.

"Then come right down."

"Would ten minutes more make any difference?" asked Ysolt.

"It might ruin us," replied the Professor.

"We can wait no longer, darling," said Sir Bleoberis, firmly.

"Then you will have to go without me," said Ysolt, with a tinge of bitterness. "It is simply impossible for me to come till I get my bundle packed."

"We will wait, then," returned Sir Bleoberis, gloomily. Then he said to the Professor: "She had no bundle with her when she was captured."

The Professor, in silent desperation, banked his fires, threw open the furnace-door, and began to wonder what kind of chance he would have in the event of a boiler explosion. Blowing off steam, under the existing circumstances, was simply out of the question.

After a delay of considerable duration, Ysolt's voice was heard again:

"Dearest!"

"What, love?" asked Sir Bleoberis.

"I am all ready now," said Ysolt.

"So are we."

"How must I get down?"

"Climb through the window and jump. You will fall into the water, but I shall catch you and place you in the boat."

"But I shall get horridly wet!"

"Of course; but, darling, that can make no great difference, so that you escape."

"And spoil my clothes, too!"

"Yes, Ysolt, I know; but——"

"I cannot do it; I am afraid." And Ysolt began to cry.

Wild despair filled the heart of Sir Bleoberis.

"I have a rope here," said the Professor; "but how are we to get it up to her?"

"Ysolt," said Bleoberis, "if I throw you the end of a rope, do you think you can catch it?"

"I will try."

Sir Bleoberis threw it. He threw it again. He threw it thirteen times, and then Ysolt contrived to catch it.

"What shall I do with it now?" she asked.

"Tie it fast to something; to the bed, or anything," replied the Knight.

"Now what shall I do?" asked the maiden, when she had made the rope secure.

"Slide right down into the boat," said the Professor.

"It would ruin my hands," said Ysolt, mournfully.

"Make the attempt, and hold on tightly," said Sir Bleoberis.

"We shall be caught if we stay here much longer," observed the Professor, with anxious thoughts of the boiler.

"Good-bye then! I am lost. Go without me! Save yourselves! Oh, this is terrible!" Ysolt began again to cry.

"I will help her," said Sir Bleoberis, seizing the rope and clambering up the wall until he reached the window.

Day began to dawn as he disappeared in the room. The Professor started his fire afresh and shut the furnace door. Sir Bleoberis, he knew, would bring down Ysolt without delay.

A moment later, the Knight seated himself upon the stone sill of the window and caught the rope with his feet and one of his hands. Then he placed his arm about Ysolt, lifted her out and began to descend.

Professor Baffin, even in his condition of intense anxiety, could not fail to admire the physical strength of the Knight. When the pair were about half-way down, the rope broke, and Ysolt and Sir Bleoberis were plunged into the lake.

The Professor, excited as he was by the accident, remembered the boiler, and determined that he would have to blow off steam and take the consequences; so he threw open the valve, and instantly the castle walls sent the fierce sound out over the waters.

Sir Bleoberis, with Ysolt upon his arm, managed to swim to the side of the boat, and the Professor after a severe effort lifted her in. Then he gave his hand to the Knight, and as Sir Bleoberis' foot touched the side the Professor shut off steam, opened his throttle-valve, backed the boat away from the wall, and started for the shore.

It was now daylight. As the boat turned the corner of the wall, it almost came into collision with a boat in which, with ten oarsmen, sat Sir Dagonet. The inmates of the castle had been alarmed by the performances of the Professor's escape-pipe; and Sir Dagonet had come out to ascertain the cause of the extraordinary noise.

The Professor's presence of mind was perfect. Turning his boat quickly to the right, he gave the

engine a full head of steam and shot away before Sir Dagonet's boat could stop its headway.

Sir Dagonet had perceived Ysolt, and recognized Sir Bleoberis. White with rage he screamed to them to stop, and he hurled at them terrible threats of vengeance if he should overtake them. As no heed was given to him he urged his rowers to put forth their mightiest efforts, and soon his boat was in hot pursuit of that in which the maiden, the Knight, and the Professor fled away from him.

By some means the people of the town of Callion had had their attention drawn to the proceedings at the castle, and now the shore was lined with spectators who watched with eager interest the race between Sir Dagonet's boat and the wonderful craft which had neither oars nor sails, and which sent a long streamer of smoke from out its chimney.

Professor Baffin, positively determined not to wed the daughter of Prince Sagramor, had prepared a stratagem. He had sent three horses to the side of the lake opposite to the town, and three or four miles distant from it, with the intention of landing there and hurrying with Ysolt and Sir Bleoberis to the home of Baron Bors, without the knowledge of the Prince.

The daylight interfered, to some extent, with the promise of the plan, but Professor Baffin resolved to carry it out at any rate, taking what he considered to be the tolerably good chances of success. He turned the prow of his boat directly toward the town, making as if he would go thither. The pursuers followed fast, and as the Professor perceived

that he could easily outstrip them, he slowed his engine somewhat, permitting Sir Dagonet to gain upon him.

When he was within a few hundred yards of the shore, close enough indeed for him to perceive that the King, Prince Sagramor, Bragwaine, and all the attendants of the court were among those who watched the race with excited interest, the Professor suddenly turned his boat half around, and putting the engine at its highest speed, ploughed swiftly toward the opposite shore.

A mighty shout went up from the onlookers. Manifestly the fugitives had the sympathy of the crowd.

The oarsmen of Sir Dagonet worked right valiantly to win the chase, but the steamer gained constantly upon them; and when her keel grated upon the sand, close by where the horses stood, the pursuers were at least a third of a mile behind.

Sir Bleoberis sprang from the boat, and helped Ysolt to alight. The Professor stopped to make the fire in the furnace more brisk, and to tie down the safety valve; then hurrying after Sir Bleoberis and Ysolt, the three mounted their horses and galloped away.

In a few moments they reached the top of a hill which commanded a view of the lake. They stopped and looked back. Sir Dagonet had just touched the shore, but, as he had no horse, further pursuit was useless. So, shaking his fist at the distant party, he turned away with an affectation of contempt, and entered the Professor's boat to satisfy his curiosity respecting it.

"Let him be careful how he meddles with that," said the Professor.

As he spoke, the boat was torn to fragments. Sir Dagonet and two of his men were seen to fall, and a second afterwards the dull, heavy detonation of an explosion reached the ears of the Professor and his friends.

"It is dreadful," said the Professor with a sigh, "but self-preservation is the first law of nature, and then he had no right to run away with Ysolt, at any rate."

### HOW THE PROFESSOR WENT HOME

The three friends turned their horses' heads away from the lake, and pressed swiftly along the road.

"It is necessary," said Professor Baffin, "that we should make good speed, for Prince Sagramor saw us come to this side of the lake, and if he shall suspect our design no doubt he will at once pursue us, in behalf of that abominable girl, his daughter."

The journey was made in silence during most of the time, for the hard riding rendered conversation exceedingly difficult, but whenever the party reached the crest of a hill which commanded a view of the road in the rear, the Professor looked anxiously behind him to ascertain if anybody was giving chase. When within a mile or two of Lonazep, he did at last perceive what appeared to be a group of horsemen at some distance behind him, and although he felt by no means certain that the Prince was among them, he nervously urged his companions forward, spurring, meantime, his own horse furiously, in the

hope that he might reach the castle of Baron Bors ere he should be overtaken.

As the party came within sight of the castle, they could hear the hoofs of the horses of the pursuers, and soon their ears were assailed by cries, demanding that they should stop. It was, indeed, Prince Sagramor and his knights, who were following fast. The Professor galloped more furiously than ever when he ascertained the truth, and Sir Bleoberis and Ysolt kept pace with him.

Just as they reached the drawbridge, however, they were overtaken; and, as it was raised, they were compelled to stop and meet the Prince face to face. The Professor hurriedly called to the warder to lower the bridge, so that Ysolt could take refuge in the castle. Then he turned, and determined to make the best of the situation. The Prince was disposed to be conciliatory.

"We came," he said, "to escort you back again. We have a guard of honor here fitting for any bridegroom."

"You are uncommonly kind," replied the Professor, "but the parade is rather unnecessary. I am not going back just at present."

"I promised Bragwaine that you would return with us," said the Prince, sternly.

"Well, you ought not to make rash promises," replied the Professor, with firmness.

"You will go, of course?"

"Of course I will not go."

"Bragwaine is waiting for you."

"That," said the Professor, "is a matter of perfect indifference to me."

"I will not be trifled with, sir," said the Prince, angrily.

"Nor will I," exclaimed the Professor. "Let us understand one another. I do not wish to marry any one. I did not ask your daughter to marry me, and I have never consented to the union. I tell you now that I positively and absolutely refuse to be forced to marry her or any other woman. I will do as I please about it; not as you please."

"Seize him," shrieked the Prince to his attendants.

"Stand off," said the Professor, presenting his revolver. "I'll kill the man who approaches me. I shall put up with this foolishness no longer."

One of the knights rode toward him. The Professor fired, and the cavalier's horse rolled in the dust. The Prince and his people were stupefied with astonishment.

At this juncture, Baron Bors, Sir Dinadan, Sir Agravaine, Sir Bleoberis, and Miss Baffin emerged from the castle. Miss Baffin flew to her father, and flung her arms about him. The Professor kissed her tenderly, and as he did so, his eye caught sight of the wire of the telephone which he had arranged for Ysolt and Sir Bleoberis. A happy thought struck him. Advancing, he said to the Prince:

"It is useless for us to quarrel over this matter. Baron Bors has here an oracle. Let us consult that."

Then the Professor whispered something to Miss Baffin, who withdrew unobserved and went into the castle.

The Prince was at first indisposed to condescend to accept the offer, but his curiosity finally overcame his pride.

"Step this way," said the Professor. "Ask your questions through this," handing him the mouthpiece, "and put this to your ear for the answer."

"What shall I say?" inquired the Prince.

"Ask if it is right that I should marry your daughter."

The Prince put the question, and the answer came.

"What does the oracle say?" asked the Professor.

"It says you shall not," replied the Prince, looking a good deal scared.

"Are you satisfied?" said the Professor.

The Prince did not answer, but he looked as if he suspected a trick of some kind, and would like to impale Professor Baffin with his lance, if he dared.

He was about to turn away in disgust, when Sir Agravaine, who stood beside him, in a few half-whispered words explained to him the method by which the Professor had imposed upon him.

In a raging fury, the Prince rode up to the Professor, and would have assailed him; but Baron Bors advanced and said:

"This gentleman is unarmed, and unused to our methods of combat. He is my guest, and he has saved my daughter. I will fight his battles."

The Prince threw his glove at the Baron's feet. Baron Bors called for his armor and his horse, and when he was ready he took his place opposite to his antagonist, and waited the signal for the contest.

"This," said the Professor, "is probably the most asinine proceeding upon record. Because I won't marry Sagramor's daughter, Sagramor is going to fight with a man who never saw his daughter."

The combat was not a long one. At the first shock both knights were unhorsed; but, drawing their swords, they rushed together and hacked at each other until the sparks flew in showers from their armor.

The Baron fought well, but presently the Prince's sword struck his shoulder with a blow which carried the blade down through the steel plate, and caused the blood to spurt forth. The Baron fell to the earth; and Prince Sagramor, remembering the small number of his attendants, and the probability that he might be assailed by the Baron's people, mounted his horse and slowly trotted away without deigning to look at Professor Baffin. They carried the Baron tenderly into the castle and put him to bed. The wound was a terrible one, and the Professor perceived that the chances of his recovery, under the rude medical treatment that could be obtained, were not very favorable. After doing what he could to help the sufferer, he withdrew from the room, and left the Baron with Lady Bors and the medical practitioner who was ordinarily employed by the family.

Miss Baffin, with Sir Dinadan, awaited her father in the hall. This was the first opportunity he had had to greet her. After some preliminary conversation, and after the Professor had expressed to Sir Dinadan his regret that the Baron should have been injured, the Professor said:

"And now, Tilly, my love, how have you been employing yourself during my absence?"

Miss Baffin blushed.

"Have you kept the journal regularly?" asked the Professor.

"Not so *very* regularly," replied Miss Baffin.

"I have a number of interesting and extraordinary things for you to record," said the Professor. "Has nothing of a remarkable character happened here during my absence?"

"Oh, yes," said Miss Baffin.

"I have learned to smoke," said Sir Dinadan.

"Indeed," said the Professor with a slight pang. "And how many cigars have you smoked?"

"Only one," replied the Knight. "It made me ill for two days. I think, perhaps, I shall give up smoking."

"I would advise you to. It is a bad habit," said the Professor, "and expensive. And then, you know, cigars are so dreadfully scarce, too."

"The Lady Tilly was very kind to me while I was ill. I believe I was delirious once or twice; and I was so touched by her sweet patience that I again proposed to her."

"While you were delirious?" asked the Professor.

"Oh, no; when I had recovered."

"What did you say to that, Tilly?" asked Professor Baffin.

"I referred him to you," replied Miss Baffin.

"But what will the Baron say?" asked the Professor.

"He and my mother have given their consent," said Sir Dinadan. "They declared that I could not have pleased them better than by making such a choice."

"Well, I don't know," said the Professor, reflectively. "I like you first rate, and if I felt certain we were going to stay here——"

"I will go with you if you leave the island," said Sir Dinadan, eagerly.

"And then you know, Din," continued the Professor familiarly, "Tilly is highly educated, while you— Well, you know you must learn to read, and write, and cipher, the very first thing."

"I have been giving him lessons while you were away," said Miss Baffin.

"How does he get along?"

"Quite well. He can do short division with a little help, and he has learned as far as the eighth line in the multiplication table."

"Eight eights are sixty-four, eight nines are seventy-two, eight tens are eighty," said Sir Dinadan, triumphantly.

"Well," said the Professor, "if Tilly loves you, and you love Tilly, I shall make no objection."

"Oh, thank you," exclaimed both of the lovers.

"But, I tell you what, Din, you are getting a good bargain. There is no finer girl, or a smarter one either, on the globe. You people here cannot half appreciate her."

For more than a week, Baron Bors failed to show any signs of improvement, and the Professor thought he perceived clearly that his case was fast getting beyond hope. He deemed it prudent, however, to keep his opinion from the members of the Baron's family. But the Baron himself soon reached the same conclusion, and one day Lady Bors came out of his room to summon Sir Dinadan, Ysolt, Sir Bleoberis, who was now formally betrothed to Ysolt, and the Professor, to the Baron's bedside.

The Baron said to them, in a feeble voice, that he felt his end approaching, and that he desired to give some instructions, and to say farewell to his family. Then he addressed himself first to Sir Dinadan, and next to Ysolt. When he had finished speaking to them he said to Lady Bors:

"And now, Ettard, a final word to you. I am going away, and you will need another friend, protector, companion, husband. Have you ever thought of any one whom you should like, other than me?"

"Never, never, never," said Lady Bors, sobbing.

"Let me advise you, then. Who would be more likely to fill my place in your heart acceptably than our good and wise and wonderful friend, Sir Baffin?"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the Professor with a start.

"Your son is to marry his daughter; and she will be happy to be here with him in the castle. Promise me that you will try to love him."

"Yes, I will try," said Lady Bors, wiping her eyes and seeming, upon the whole, rather more cheerful.

"That," said the Baron, "does not altogether satisfy me. I place upon you my command that you shall marry him. Will you consent to obey?"

"I will consent to anything, so that your last hour may be happier," said Lady Bors with an air of resignation. She was supported during the trial, perhaps, by the reflection that in dealing with lumbago Professor Baffin had no superior in the kingdom.

Father Anselm was announced. "Withdraw, now," said the Baron to all of his family but Lady Bors. "I must speak with the Hermit."

Professor Baffin encountered the Hermit at the door. The holy man stopped long enough to say that a huge ship had come near to the shore upon which the Professor had landed, and that it was anchored there. From its mast, Father Anselm said, fluttered a banner of red and white stripes with a starry field of blue.

The Professor's heart beat fast. For a moment he could hardly control his emotion. He resolved to go at once to the shore and to take his daughter with him. Withdrawing her from her companions the two strolled slowly out from the castle into the park. Then, hastening their steps, they passed towards the shore. In a few moments they reached it, and there, sure enough, they saw a barque at anchor, while from her mast-head floated the American flag.

A boat belonging to the barque had come to the shore to obtain water from the stream. Professor Baffin entered into conversation with the officer who commanded the boat. The vessel proved to be the "Mary L. Simpson," of Martha's Vineyard, bound from the Azores to New York. When the Professor had explained to the officer that he and his daughter were Americans, the mate invited them to come aboard so that he could introduce them to the captain.

"Shall we go, my child?" asked the Professor.

"If we can return in a very few moments, we might go," said Miss Baffin.

They entered the boat, and when they reached the vessel, they were warmly greeted by Captain Magruder.

While they were talking with him in his cabin the air suddenly darkened, and the captain rushed out upon deck. Almost before he reached it a terrific gale struck the barque, and she began to drag her anchors. Fortunately the wind blew off shore, and the captain, weighing anchor, let the barque drive right out to sea. The Professor was about to remark to Miss Baffin that he feared there was small chance of his ever seeing the island again, when a lurch of the vessel threw him over. His head struck the sharp corner of the captain's chest, and he became unconscious.

When Professor Baffin regained his senses, he found that he was lying in a berth in a ship's cabin. Some one was sitting beside him.

"Is that you, Tilly?" he asked, in a faint voice.

"Yes, pa; I am glad you are conscious again. Can I give you anything?"

"Have I been long unconscious, Tilly?"

"You have been very ill for several days; delirious sometimes."

"Is the captain going back to the island?"

"Going back to the *what*, pa?"

"To the island. It must have seemed dreadfully heartless for us to leave the castle while the Baron was dying."

"While the Baron was dying! What do you mean?"

"Why, Baron Bors could not have lived much longer. I am afraid Sir Dinadan will think hard of us."

"I haven't the least idea what you are talking

about. Poor pa! your mind is beginning to wander again. Turn over, and try to go to sleep."

Professor Baffin was silent for a moment. Then he said:

"Tilly, do you mean to say you never heard of Baron Bors?"

"Never."

"And that you were never engaged to Sir Dinadan?"

"Pa, how absurd! Who are these people?"

"Were you not upon the island with me, at the castle?"

"How could we have gone upon an island, pa, when we were taken from the raft by the ship?"

"Tilly, my child, when I get perfectly well I shall have to tell you of the most extraordinary series of circumstances that has come under my observation during the whole course of my existence!"

Then Professor Baffin closed his eyes and fell into a doze, and Miss Baffin went up to tell the surgeon of the ship "Undine," from Philadelphia to Glasgow, that her father seemed to be getting better.

## VII

## THE REFORM CAMPAIGN IN MERIWEATHER COUNTY

I HAVE no objection (writes William Percival Latimer to me, from a remote mining camp in Mexico) to giving to you the whole story of my unfortunate experience as a participant in the Reform campaign in Meriweather County. My fate may perhaps serve as a warning to others, and, at any rate, I am entitled to have my version of this painful, and, in one sense shameful, case presented to the public.

You have known me for many years. I need not tell you that I have never participated in nor had any taste for public affairs. I have had no acquaintance with politics but in a general way. I have not coveted office. I am a quiet, retiring, I fear shy, man, used to devoting my time to my work in the Rubicon National Bank, to my church, my family and my somewhat narrow social duties. I have never been able to speak while upon my feet, excepting before my Sunday-school and at the ordinary church meetings, and I shrink so much from publicity that I have always felt a kind of nervous shock if my name happened to appear in a newspaper.

When the reform movement was begun in Meriweather County, McWhirr, the county chairman, came to me and informed me that the Colonel, who really directed the affairs of the Reform party, in-

sisted that I should be placed upon the ticket as candidate for the position of Supervisor of Fences and Telegraph Poles. He said that the Colonel, who was to be the nominee for Sheriff, would represent brains whilst I should represent respectability. I indicated to McWhirr that there was but half a compliment, and that of a cloudy character, imbedded in this proposition, and then I said that the Colonel, with his record and reputation, seemed to me to be a queer personage to direct a Reform campaign.

McWhirr said that the Colonel had been thoroughly reformed before he was permitted to engage in the movement; that he was a changed man. "The fundamental principle of fair play," continued McWhirr, "is that repentance must be accepted as obliterating the past," and the Colonel's very familiarity with the evil practices of politicians made his services invaluable to reformers who were proposing to defeat the politicians. "Would you shut the gates of mercy upon a penitent sinner?" he asked; and when I said that I should hesitate to engage in such a proceeding he answered: "Very well, then, give the Colonel a chance."

When I urged that I did not want any public office, and, indeed, could not accept this particular place if I should be elected, McWhirr assured me that I need not worry about that. "It is a part of our scheme," he said, "to defeat you. The Colonel's plans work out that way. He's as level-headed as they make 'em, I tell you! Far-sighted and keen! That man's just a wonder."

Then, of course, I insisted that I could not per-

ceive how the sacred cause of Reform was to be promoted by defeat of the Reform candidates, but McWhirr said: "That's because you've never been in politics. It's the Colonel's game. If you want subtlety, there you have it. That man is deep! You don't want to be elected? Very well. The Colonel puts you up, knocks you down, and with you as the sacrifice, sweeps all the rest of the ticket to glorious victory."

Well, you can believe that this kind of talk did not go far to reassure me, but McWhirr stayed for an hour or more, and talked and argued. At last he half-convinced me that the very foundations of the Republic were undermined, and that if I wouldn't consent to run on the Reform ticket for the Supervisorship of Fences and Telegraph Poles our institutions would totter to their ruin and the whole sacred heritage of the Fathers would be swept to irretrievable destruction. You know the result. I was weak enough to yield.

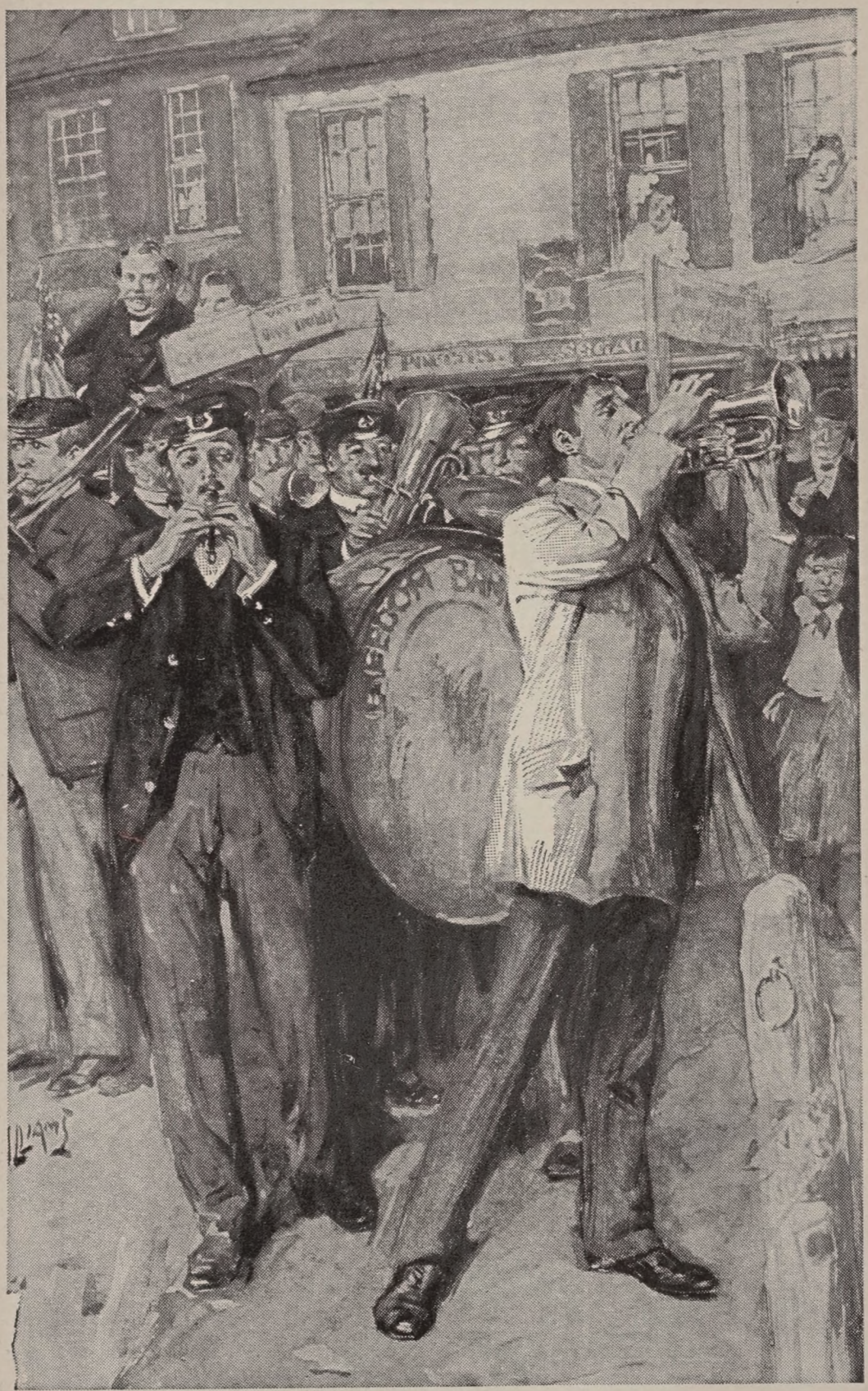
My misgivings were to some extent removed by my wife, who, when McWhirr had gone back to report to the Colonel, assured me that I had done my duty. "You had no right," she said, "to refuse such a nomination. It is the duty of every citizen to try to save his country. Your fellow-citizens summon you to their service; and, like Cincinnatus of old, you relinquish the handles of your plough and obey the call."

Poor woman! She meant well by that allusion to Cincinnatus, and I must say that it comforted and encouraged me to some extent, but Cincinnatus, I am nearly certain (I don't remember the particulars

of his entire case), never ran on the same ticket with a man like the Colonel.

The Colonel began the campaign with vigor. On the night of the day of the adjournment of the convention he had the brass band from Angel Bluffs up to serenade me. The band paraded all about Rubicon, playing in a most vehement manner. McWhirr, who called on me early, said I ought to have refreshments of some kind on my front porch for the visitors; and so, when the band had played until every one of my neighbors had become the malevolent enemy of the Reform movement, Mrs. Latimer invited the musicians to partake of ice cream and cake. It was clear enough that there was disappointment at the nature of the refreshments, and the snare-drummer was openly ribald. I suspect him of connection with the disappearance of two of our spoons.

The fat German who played the saxophone drew me into the hallway and told me plainly that the cause of Reform was lost if ice cream was as far as my moral principles would permit me to go. Then he asked me to go with him into the library where, after closing the door and pulling down the window shades, he whispered that he recognized me. I said to him that I did not understand him; and he then said he knew my real name was Obermann, that I was a native of Eichenberg, Germany, where I still owed four dollars to his father, a shoemaker, in that town. He said I had fled to avoid military service, but that he would not give me away because he had left Germany under queer circumstances himself, and two dollars and a quarter would close his lips forever.



THE BAND FROM ANGEL BLUFFS

Then the band stood out on the front grass plot and played Columbia the Gem of the Ocean, the German saxophone player staring fixedly at me and winking at me whenever he came to a minim rest. The band could be heard all through the night in various parts of Rubicon extinguishing the enthusiasm for Reform by original and reckless interpretations of popular selections.

McWhirr said, when he met me at the bank, that he feared the thing had not been a large success; that ice cream was hardly the right material for imparting fervor to political enthusiasm, and that my very unfortunate manner had given offense to the snare-drummer, who controlled thirty-four votes in his precinct. I offered to resign, but McWhirr said: "Not on your life; the Colonel will fix that fellow." Then McWhirr asked if I would not go over to Swisher's Corners on Wednesday evening to meet the O'Flaherty Club and give a chalk-talk, something like those I gave in Sunday-school. He thought if I could take for my subject the well-known fact that the Regulars were trying to steal the penitentiary for a club house for the Young Men's Invincible Club I could strike a telling blow for the glorious cause. But I insisted upon refusal, because I never saw a man trying to steal a penitentiary and I could not imagine how to draw such an institution on a blackboard.

I pass over many painful things. I looked for them, of course, but I hardly thought the Susanville *Times* would be so indecent as to suggest that I gave my baby ipecac to check its appetite. It cut me to the

heart. The Rubicon *Post* had always been a favorite in my family and I used it whenever we wished to advertise for a hired girl. It was, therefore, with feelings of indignation and dismay that I found in it one morning a cartoon representing me as a monkey with a horrible grin upon my face, hanging by a long, curly tail from the limb of a tree while I tossed cocoanuts down to the Colonel. I hid the paper from my wife to save her from pain, but when the children came home to lunch I felt that they had seen it. My oldest boy looked queerly at me all through the meal, laughing in a strange way from time to time, and at last his manner became so disrespectful and set such a bad example to his younger brothers that I called him into the pantry, cuffed him severely, and sent him off to his grandmother's to stay for a week.

Much is to be said for a free press, I know, but it seems to me that many of the newspapers are mere instruments for debauching the public conscience. There would be a censorship, if I had my way.

Of the delegations that visited me to obtain a definition of my principles upon various subjects I shall not attempt to speak at length. I may, however, allude to the embarrassment to which I was subjected by the committee sent to see me by the Vegetarian Society of Honey Creek. Without committing myself in set terms to the doctrine of the rejection of all animal food, I spoke in language of warm eulogy of the well-known refining effect of vegetable food, and I even went so far as to intimate that the slaughter of spring lambs had always appealed strongly to my tenderest feelings.

Some of the members of the committee seemed to consider me sound, if I could judge by the smiles upon their faces, but the chairman looked sternly at me, and with the air of a man who is not to be deceived by soft words demanded if I ranged myself with the Undergrounds or the Abovegrounds?

In casting about for an explanation of his meaning I learned from the whispers of a friendly member of the delegation that the Vegetarians who favor potatoes and other subterranean products are regarded with scorn and hatred by the Vegetarians who approve only of tomatoes and peas. The theory, I think, is that the vegetables of the subsoil appeal only to the lower nature, while those that grow in the sunshine tend to make men more spiritual. It was a dilemma, for how could I tell which theory found favor in Honey Creek? So I tried to compromise the matter by dwelling at some length upon the uplifting influence of celery, which, I belive, is first grown in the air and then buried in the soil.

But the chairman saw through the attempt and, shaking his forefinger at me, said plainly that I was evading the question and that the committee would report against me. Talk, he said, was useless in face of the fact that he had seen the butcher carrying a sirloin steak into my kitchen as the committee came through my front gate. Honey Creek, he declared, as he put on his hat and headed the delegation toward the door, would know how to deal at the polls with a candidate who added duplicity to ferocious thirst for the blood of inoffensive beasts, "whose lives, I want to tell you," he said, nodding his head at me in a menacing manner, "are just as precious as yours."

The next evening I had a visit from a delegation representing the Anti-Virus Association of Polo. The purpose of the coming of these gentlemen was to ascertain if I favored compulsory vaccination. Really, you know, I had given no thought at all to the subject, and I cared nothing about it, one way or another. "Because if you do," said the chairman, who watched me narrowly while I silently reflected upon his question, quite uncertain how to frame a judicious answer, "we demand to know if you are or are not prepared to insist upon vaccine material direct from the cow?"

This was even more perplexing, and so at length I said that as a matter of fact I had never examined the authorities upon the matter, and must confess my inability to reach thoroughly sound conclusions. For one thing, I was not aware of the precise relation of the cow to the operation of vaccination, but if the direct-from-the-cow plan was, upon the whole, thought by trained scientific minds to be the safest and best, why, of course, I was willing to commit myself unreservedly to it.

The chairman said that he was prepared, in dealing with a politician, to have an attempt at shuffling, but as an educated man I certainly knew that the word vaccination was derived from Vaccinus, a cow, showing the closest possible relation of the two things, and he gave me warning now that the Anti-Virus Association of Polo was ready to pour money into Meriweather County to defeat any candidate whose views upon this vitally important subject were of a questionable character, and, in his opinion, mine were.

When I asked him if he would be good enough to explain to me what this matter had to do with the duties of a Supervisor of Fences and Telegraph Poles, he answered quite rudely: "It has a heap to do with it. Don't cows break down fences and rub themselves against telegraph poles? We'll show you over at Polo, when the votes are counted, what it has to do with it."

As the delegation began to withdraw I thought to restore good feeling and to close the incident happily by mentioning that I did not care for office; but, as Mrs. Latimer had very felicitously suggested, I had consented at the urgent solicitation of my countrymen to act along the lines of the well-known historical precedent established by Cincinnatus.

But the chairman, turning upon me fiercely, said that what was done in Cincinnati was one thing and what was done in Meriweather County was another thing. He spoke for nothing but Polo and cow-virus, and he meant just what he said.

Then he slammed the front door and a moment later closed the front gate with even greater violence.

McWhirr walked home from the post-office with me on the next afternoon and seemed much depressed. He said: "If you go on this way you'll wreck the whole thing. I count Polo and Honey Creek as good as lost after the way I hear you handled those two delegations yesterday. Of course they are cranks, but they have votes, and if you only *could* show some little versatility in adapting yourself to the vagaries of these people. Have you *no* acquaintance with human nature?"

"But," I said to him, "why not let it go to wreck? That's what we want. You said yourself you wanted me to be defeated."

"Now look here, Latimer," he said angrily, "you're a candidate in the hands of the Colonel, and if you meddle with his plans and try to play politics on your own account the first thing you know you'll be in the worst kind of trouble. Mind what I tell you. I wish we had never put you up." I said I wished so, too.

"The Colonel says if he had it to do over again he'd give you the go-by and nominate an old settler. The old settlers are getting restless because they're not recognized. I wish to gracious you were one, or else a wiser man."

I was about to offer a dismal sort of pleasantry to the effect that it was useless for a man at my time of life even to begin to try to become an old settler, but McWhirr brushed it aside in a disagreeable manner and said he would send Moriarty up to see me tomorrow evening to give me some kind of drill in practical politics. Moriarty, he assured me, was past master in the business, and perhaps even I could learn from him some of the elementary principles of the thing.

So Moriarty came. He was a big ruffian who towered above me in my parlor and looked down upon me, making me feel smaller than I really am. I have tried not to hate that man. He addressed me as sonny, and almost the first question he asked me was if I was fly. I hardly knew how to talk to a man of that kind; I was so much embarrassed that

just for the sake of saying something I mentioned that Mrs. Latimer had recalled an incident in the life of Cincinnatus as having some resemblance to my embarkation in the campaign for Reform. What do you think he answered? "Reform nit!" Extraordinary, wasn't it?

Moriarty, however, went on to say that McWhirr told him I was a slush-and-mush man with a mud head and no sand in my holder, "but I can see at a glance," he said, "that you're one of us. I'd know you anywheres for a sundowner. What we're going to do is to give the Regulars hot stuff by the ladleful, and when I get at 'em you take notice that you'll hear 'em gurgle; mark me!"

I interrupted him to say that if he had any suggestions to make for my personal line of action I was willing to hear them. But he replied to the effect that my best hold was to give him plenty of dough and then go off by myself and saw wood. I never could understand slang, so even when he asked me if I had any long green in my clothes his design was not clear to me. But at last he made it plain that he wanted money, and I gathered that he wished to use it for corrupt purposes. I told him flatly that I would not give him a dollar.

Then the ruffian became enraged, shook his fist at me and said I was a sawduster and ought to go and play dolls with real baby clothes, instead of trying to play politics.

I ordered him to quit the house, but he jumped at me so that I was compelled to retreat behind the sofa. He roared out that he knew I was a defaulter

at the bank and he had the written confession of my pal, and then he said, "You'll do time, young feller, before I quit you. You'll hear yourself sizzle on the iron bars. I'll jot you down in my diary," he said.

You know how helpless a small man is with a gigantic brigand like this, and so I slipped from the shelter of the sofa and ran upstairs, leaving the parlor at the mercy of the scoundrel. As I passed through the doorway I heard him say that I was a snoozer.

I was really afraid the fellow would plot some harm to me or to my family, and I told McWhirr so when I saw him in the morning; but McWhirr looked gloomy and said that if my nomination papers hadn't been filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth he would insist upon my getting off the ticket before I offended with my strange conduct any other devoted adherents of the cause. However, said McWhirr, we just have to make the best of a bad job; and then he said that if I couldn't do anything for the cause myself perhaps some of my friends could, and would I ask some of the young men in my Sunday-school class to attend a mass meeting of the Regulars in Maginnis Hall and sit on the front benches and howl down the speakers. "Every little helps," he said.

Mrs. Latimer, in reflecting upon this really indecent suggestion, said she never before fully realized the wickedness of politics.

On the following Tuesday afternoon the express man dumped upon my front porch a box of strange appearance. It was made of wood, with strips of muslin glued along the edges and with a bit of string hanging from a hole in the lid. I was not expecting

anything to come to me by express, and while I stood there looking at the box, thus strangely prepared, I wondered what it could be.

When Mrs. Latimer came out she reminded me of the threats of Moriarty and said she was sure it was an infernal machine. An instant later she darted into the hall, bolted the door with queer thoughtlessness of the peril in which she left her husband, and flew upstairs, where she buried herself in the bedclothes. I forgave her freely, for I felt that she was unnerved. Nor could I blame her for having fear, for Moriarty was capable of anything, and I had heard McWhirr himself say that if you can assassinate a candidate it sometimes helps the cause, for you get rid of the man you don't want and you make votes by fastening the crime on the enemy. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," McWhirr said to me with his own lips, in speaking of just such a case out in Arizona.

As a matter of philosophy this, no doubt, is perfectly sound, but I am an unaspiring man, with no longings for the honors of martyrdom and, besides, I have a wife and children, with not a dollar of insurance on my life, and my house was burdened with a small mortgage.

I had an impulse to fly down the street, leaving the box lying there, but that seemed cowardly. Suppose it should be exploded by clockwork, blowing Mrs. Latimer to atoms and reducing the house to splinters and the mortgage to waste-paper? The thought was intolerable. I walked around to the back of the house and got the garden-hose. Fastening it

to the spigot I turned a stream of water into that wicked-looking box, determined to saturate it until explosives should be made harmless. While I was engaged in this work our policeman, Barker, came by and I called him in. When I had explained to him the nature of my fears respecting the box he looked grave and said:

"Very likely, Mr. Latimer. It looks like an infernal machine, don't it? The Regulars are bilin' mad at you and there's no knowin' what they'll do."

"I think the best thing to do," I said, "would be for the police authorities to investigate it. Suppose you take it down to the station house?"

Barker walked around the box four or five times, looking closely at it, and then he said he thought he heard wheels going around inside. I was sure he was mistaken. Then he proposed that we touch a match to the end of the string and run. This seemed to me to be mere madness. Barker said he wasn't afraid of the thing but, if he carried it, it would wet his uniform and that was against the regulations. I proposed a wheelbarrow, but he asked me if I didn't know that to jolt dynamite would be to blow us both into eternity. Finally he said that if the job was worth seventy-five cents to me, and I would take care of the orphans if there should be an explosion, he thought he knew a man who would take the risk of carrying it off. I gave him the money and promised to look after the children who should be deprived of their parent by an accident to the box, and then I urged him to go and find the man at once. Barker put the silver in his pocket, walked around

the box twice more, then picked it up and, holding it away from him, walked rapidly to the station house.

I called Mrs. Latimer and we stood upon the porch, waiting to hear the explosion. In twenty minutes Barker returned with sunshine upon his face and handed me a wet letter, the ink upon which had run in such a manner that I could read the contents with difficulty. It was from the Corresponding Secretary of the Woman's Rights Association of Happy Hollow, saying that the Society, recognizing the fact that my candidacy was a tribute to, as my election would be a victory for, the cause of Woman Suffrage, begged me to accept with its warmest congratulations the eight pounds of caramels sent in the box with this letter.

As I folded the letter, Mrs. Latimer, whose fears, of course, had been completely removed, asked Policeman Barker where the caramels were. "Sp'iled, ma'm. Sp'iled by Mr. Latimer squirtin' the hose on 'em." But, in truth, I noticed chocolate-stains about the corners of Barker's mouth, and he had a guilty look wholly foreign to his usually honest and open countenance.

Unfortunately the news of this incident got about and created much amusement, and McWhirr, with the air of a man from whose soul Hope has forever fled, said that if he didn't know positively I was a square man he would actually believe the Regulars had bribed me to work against the Reform ticket. Despair was in every tone of his voice, and he said the Colonel was publicly using language about me that was not fit to print.

But there is no use in prolonging the narrative of the events of the campaign. Election day came and passed, and all the candidates on the Reform ticket were defeated but the Colonel and me. The Colonel had 1457 majority and I was elected by four votes.

The result seemed to me strarge. McWhirr explained that the Colonel had done the biggest job in trading that he ever heard of. But my election was a serious matter. He said I was the last man he ever should have suspected of doing crooked work. I asked him what he meant. He answered that he thought I hadn't wanted the office, and why I should take any chances of criminal prosecution for a place that was worth only three hundred dollars a year, and I to find my own horse and buggy, was beyond him. The fraudulent voting had been awful. The Colonel had declared he never saw anything like it even in his experience. "Queer," said McWhirr, "how a man always goes so far in his first step from the paths of rectitude. There's trouble ahead for you, Latimer. You know I told you politics was a dangerous thing to fool with."

When the Colonel sent for me I went down to his headquarters at the Eagle Hotel. He had with him the defeated Regular candidate for Sheriff. The Colonel had just made this man his first deputy.

"My plans," said the Colonel, "slipped a cog, somehow or other. I had laid it out to beat you. You voted for yourself, of course, but some of your friends must have done lively work. I hear queer stories about your Sunday-school class."

I asked him to explain himself, and then he said he had been conducting a Reform campaign and had to be careful. He was willing to pass this thing of mine by unless the opposition took it into the courts. But Dixon, the Regular chairman, was furious, and it might be necessary to throw him a victim.

He said he would see Dixon.

This was on Wednesday. On Thursday Moriarty and seven other ruffians, most of them from Susanville, were arrested for repeating. In the magistrate's office they all swore they were members of Latimer's Sunday-school class and that I had hired them to do the work. Moriarty said that I first made the proposition after the lesson on the preceding Sunday, and that he was so much shocked that he completely lost his presence of mind.

You know how news of that kind flies about in a small town. My pastor called the same evening and after speaking with deep feeling about the demoralizing influence of greed for office, and about the awful example to my children, he said to me, "Go away somewhere dear friend, and try to live down your past."

The fat German who played the saxophone also came to the kitchen door and urged me to return to Germany. He said he knew his father would forgive the four dollars; he would write to him about it; and he would ask his father to give me lessons on the saxophone so that I could join a German band and begin my life over again.

Mrs. Latimer, whose distress was of the most dreadful character, insisted that I should take legal advice and so I called in Major Wilson.

The Major, after examining the case, said he considered the situation grave. "Whichever way you look at it," urged he, "you must lose. If you make an unsuccessful defense against the charge that you instigated your Sunday-school class to stuff the ballot-boxes with fraudulent votes (and I don't see how you can overthrow the testimony of Moriarty) you go to prison. If you prove that you are not guilty, you will have to accept the office to which you were elected or go to prison. The law gives you no option. If you accept the office you give up a $2500 place for a $300 place and you are a ruined man. Your mortgage will be foreclosed in three days. So there you are. It is a bad job. I don't think I ever handled a tougher problem than how to keep you from incarceration or from financial ruin."

He said he hated to suggest separation from my family, but, as my friend as well as my counsel, he inclined to believe the easiest solution to the difficulty was for me to get away quietly in the night, and in some distant clime, where I was not known, to try to struggle to my feet again.

I asked him if he didn't think this was pretty hard for a man whose sole motive for appearing in public life was that which had animated Cincinnatus, namely, a desire to serve his fellow-countrymen?

But the Major said the cases were different; times had changed; Cincinnatus, in his view, was rather a shady character anyhow, and even supposing him to have been all right, things nowadays didn't work as they used to. The Major said he had no money to lend, but if I was short of traveling expenses he would

take my house off my hands for spot cash, which he could borrow.

I had better act quickly, because as he came up the street he heard that the directors of the bank had experts at work on my books, looking up evidence of a possible shortage; and the president told him yesterday that, no matter what the examination showed, they were determined to sever my connection with the bank, because it was unsafe for a financial institution to have an employee concerning whom such ugly rumors were in circulation.

And so here I am, down in this remote Mexican mining town, keeping books for the Turalura Silver Mining Company, my reputation blasted, my home broken up, and I an exile from my native land. Not that I care so much for exile, for the Republic is lost beyond hope. The Colonel and McWhirr will kill it if nobody else does. I shall try to keep out of politics here. But I do wish you would look up a matter for me. What *are* the exact facts, anyway, about Cincinnatus?

## VIII

## AN OLD FOGY

"THE good old times! And the old times *were* good, my dear; better, much better, than the times that you live in. I know I am an old fogy, Nelly," said Ephraim Batterby, refilling his pipe, and looking at his granddaughter, who sat with him in front of the fire, with her head bending over her sewing; "I know I am an old fogy, and I glory in it."

"But you never will be for me, Grandpa," said Nelly, glancing at him with a smile.

"Yes, my dear, I am for everybody. I am a man of the past. Everything I ever cared for and ever loved, excepting you, belongs to the years that have gone, and my affections belong to those years. I liked the people of the old time better than I do those of the new. I loved their simpler ways, the ways that I knew in my boyhood, threescore and more years ago. I am sure the world is not so good as it was then. It is smarter, perhaps; it knows more, but its wisdom vexes and disgusts me. I am not certain, my dear, that, if I had my way, I would not sweep away, at one stroke, all the so-called 'modern conveniences,' and return to the ancient methods."

"They were very slow, Grandpa."

"Yes, slow; and for that I liked them. We go

too fast now; but our speed, I am afraid, is hurrying us in the wrong direction. We were satisfied in the old time with what we had. It was good enough. Are men contented now? No; they are still improving and improving; still reaching out for something that will be quicker, or easier, or cheaper than the things that are. We appear to have gained much; but really we have gained nothing. We are not a bit better off now than we were long ago; not so well off, in my opinion."

"But, Grandpa, you must remember that you were young then, and perhaps looked at the world in a more hopeful way than you do now."

"Yes, I allow for that, Nelly, I allow for that; I don't deceive myself. My youth does not seem so very far off that I cannot remember it distinctly. I judge the time fairly, now in my old age, as I judge the present time, and my assured opinion is that it was superior in its ways, its life, and its people. Its people! Ah, Nelly, my dear, there were three persons in that past who alone would consecrate it to me. I am afraid there are not many women now like your mother and mine, and like my dear wife, whom you never saw. It seems to me, my child, that I would willingly live all my life over again, with its strifes and sorrows, if I could clasp again the hand of one of those angelic women, and hear a word from her sweet lips."

As the old man wiped the gathering moisture from his eyes, Nelly remained silent, choosing not to disturb the reverie into which he had fallen. Presently Ephraim rose abruptly, and said, with a smile:

"Come, Nelly dear, I guess it is time to go to bed. I must be up very early tomorrow morning."

"At what hour do you want breakfast, Grandpa?"

"Why, too soon for you, you sleepy puss. I shall breakfast by myself before you are up, or else I shall breakfast down town. I have a huge cargo of wheat in from Chicago, and I must arrange to have it shipped for Liverpool. There is one thing that remains to me from the old time, and that is some of the hard work of my youth; but even that seems a little harder than it used to. So, come now; to bed! to bed!"

While he was undressing, and long after he had crept beneath the blankets, Ephraim's thoughts wandered back and back through the spent years; and, as the happiness he had known came freshly and strongly into his mind, he felt drawn more and more towards it; until the new and the old mingled together in strange but placid confusion in his brain, and he fell asleep.

When he awoke it was still dark, for the winter was just begun; but he heard—or did he only dream that he heard?—a clock in some neighboring steeple strike *six*. He knew that he must get up, for his business upon that day demanded early attention.

He sat up in bed, yawned, stretched his arms once or twice, and then, flinging the covering aside, he leaped to the floor. He fell, and hurt his arm somewhat. Strange that he should have miscalculated the distance! The bed seemed more than twice as high from the floor as it should be. It was too dark to see distinctly, so he crept to the

bed with extended hands, and felt it. Yes, it was at least four feet from the floor, and, very oddly, it had long, slim posts, such as bedsteads used to have, instead of the low, carved footboard, and the high, postless headboard, which belonged to the bedstead upon which he had slept in recent years. Ephraim resolved to strike a light. He groped his way to the table, and tried to find the match-box. It was not there; he could not discover it upon the bureau either. But he found something else, which he did not recognize at first, but which a more careful examination with his fingers told him was a flint and steel. He was vexed that any one should play such a trick upon him. How could he ever succeed in lighting the gas with flint and steel!

But he resolved to try, and he moved over towards the gas-bracket by the bureau. It was not there! He passed his cold hand over a square yard of the wall, where the bracket used to be, but it had vanished. It actually seemed, too, as if there were no paper on the wall, for the whitewash scaled off beneath his fingers.

Perplexed and angry, Ephraim was about to replace the flint and steel upon the bureau, and to dress in the dark, when his hand encountered a candlestick. It contained a candle. He determined to try to light it. He struck the flint upon the steel at least a dozen times, in the way he remembered doing so often when he was a boy, but the sparks refused to catch the tinder. He struck again and again, until he became really warm with effort and indignation, and at last he succeeded.

It was only a poor, slim tallow candle, and Ephraim thought the light was not much better than the darkness, it was so dim and flickering and dismal. He was conscious then that the room was chill, although his body felt so warm; and, for fear he should catch cold, he thought he would open the register, and let in some warm air. The register had disappeared! There, right before him, was a vast old-fashioned fireplace filled with wood. By what means the transformation had been effected, he could not imagine. But he was not greatly displeased.

"I always did like an open wood-fire," he said, "and now I will have a roaring one."

So he touched the flame of the candle to the light kindling-wood, and in a moment it was afire.

"I will wash while it is burning up," said Ephraim.

He went to the place where he thought he should find the fixed washstand, with hot and cold water running from the pipes, but he was amazed to find that it had followed the strange fashion of the room, and had gone also! There was an old hand-basin, with a cracked china pitcher, standing upon a movable washstand, but the water in the pitcher had been turned to solid ice.

With an exclamation of impatience and indignation, Ephraim placed the pitcher between the andirons, close to the wood in the chimney-place; and he did so with smarting eyes, for the flue was cold, and volumes of smoke were pouring out into the room. In a few moments he felt that he should suffocate unless he could get some fresh air, so he resolved to open the upper sash of the window.

When he got to the window he perceived that the panes of glass were only a few inches square, and that the woodwork inclosing them was thrice thicker and heavier than it had been. He strove to pull down the upper sash, but the effort was vain; it would not move. He tried to lift the lower sash; it went up with difficulty; it seemed to weigh a hundred pounds; and, when he got it up, it would not stay. He succeeded, finally, in keeping it open by placing a chair beneath it.

When the ice in the pitcher had thawed, he finished his toilette, and then he descended the stairs. As nobody seemed to be moving in the house, he resolved to go out and get his breakfast at a restaurant. He unlocked the front door, and emerged into the street just as daylight fairly had begun.

As Ephraim descended the steps in front of his house, he had a distinct impression that something was wrong, and he was conscious of a feeling of irritation; but it seemed to him that his mind, for some reason, did not operate with its accustomed precision; and, while he realized the fact of a partial and very unexpected change of the conditions of his life, he found that when he tried, in a strangely feeble way, to grapple with the problem, the solution eluded him and baffled him.

The force of habit, rather than a very clearly defined purpose, led him to walk to the corner of the street, just below his dwelling, and to pause there, as usual, to await the coming of the street-car which should carry him down town. Following a custom, too, he took from his waistcoat pocket two

or three pennies (which, to his surprise, had swollen to the uncomfortable dimensions of the old copper cents), and looked around for the newsboy from whom he bought, every morning, the daily paper.

The lad, however, was not to be seen; and Ephraim was somewhat vexed at his absence, because he was especially anxious upon that morning to observe the quotations of the Chicago and Liverpool grain markets, and to ascertain what steamers were loading at the wharves.

The street-car was delayed much longer than he expected, and, while he waited, a man passed by, dressed oddly, Ephraim noticed, in knee-breeches and very old-fashioned coat and hat. Ephraim said to him, politely:

"Can you tell me, sir, where I can get a morning paper in this neighborhood? The lad I buy from, commonly, is not at his post this morning."

The stranger, stopping, looked at Ephraim with a queer expression, and presently said:

"I don't think I understand you; a *morning* paper, did you say?"

"Yes, one of the morning papers; the *Argus* or *Commerical*—any of them."

"Why, my dear sir, there is but one newspaper published in this city. It is the *Gazette*. It comes out on Saturday, and this, you know, is only Tuesday."

"Do you mean to say that we have no daily papers?" exclaimed Ephraim, somewhat angrily.

"*Daily* papers! Papers published every day! Why, sir, there is not such a newspaper in the world, and there never will be."

"Pshaw!" said Ephraim, turning his back upon the man in disgust.

The stranger smiled, and, shaking his head as if he had serious doubts of Ephraim's sanity, passed onward.

"The man is cracked," said Ephraim, looking after him. "No daily papers! The fellow has just come from the interior of Africa, or else he is an escaped lunatic. It is very queer that car does not come," and Ephraim glanced up the street anxiously. "There is not a car in sight. A fire somewhere, I suppose. Too bad that I should have lost so much time. I shall walk down."

But, as Ephraim stepped into the highway, he was surprised to find that there were no rails upon it. The cobblestone pavement was unbroken.

"Well, upon my word! This is the strangest thing of all. What on earth has become of the street-cars? I must go afoot, I suppose, if the distance *is* great. I am afraid I shall be too late for business, as it is."

As he walked onward at a rapid pace, and his eyes fell upon the buildings along the route, he was queerly sensible that the city had undergone a certain process of transformation. It had a familiar appearance, too. He seemed to know it in its present aspect, and yet not to know it. The way was perfectly familiar to him, and he recognized all the prominent landmarks easily, and still he had an indefinable feeling that some other city had stood where this did; that he had known this very route under other conditions, and the later conditions were those that had passed away,

while those that he now saw belonged to a much earlier period.

He felt, too, that the change, whatever it was, had brought a loss with it. The buildings that lined the street now he thought very ugly. They were old, misshapen, having pent-roofs with absurdly high gables, and the shop-windows were small, dingy, and set with small panes of glass. He had known it as a handsome street, edged with noble edifices, and offering to the gaze of the pedestrian a succession of splendid windows filled with merchandise of the most brilliant description.

But Ephraim pressed on with a determination to seek his favorite restaurant, for he began to feel very hungry. In a little while he reached the corner where the restaurant should have been, but to his vexation he saw that the building there was a coffee-house of mean appearance, in front of which swung a blurred and faded sign.

He resolved to enter, for he could get a breakfast here, at least. He pushed through the low doorway and over the sanded floor into a narrow sort of box, where a table was spread; and, as he did so, he had a hazy feeling that this, too, was something that he was familiar with.

"It must be," he said, "that my brain is producing a succession of those sensations that I have had sometimes before, which persuade the credulous that we move continually in a circle, and forever live our lives over again."

As he took his seat a waiter approached him.

"Give me a bill of fare," said Ephraim.

"Bill of fare, sir? Have no bill of fare, sir. Never have them, sir; no coffee-house has them, sir. Get you up a nice breakfast though, sir."

"What have you got?"

"Ham, sir; steak, sir; boiled egg, sir; coffee, tea, muffins. Just in from furrin countries, sir, are you?"

"Never mind where I am from," said Ephraim, testily. "Bring me a broiled steak, an egg, and some muffins and coffee, and bring them quickly."

"Yes, sir; half a minute, sir. Anything else, sir?"

"Bring me a newspaper."

"Yes, sir; here it is, sir, the very latest, sir."

Ephraim took the paper and glanced at it. It was the *Weekly Gazette*, four days old; a little sheet of yellow-brown paper, poorly printed, containing some fragments of news, and nothing later from Europe than November 6th, although the *Gazette* bore date December 19th. So soon as Ephraim comprehended its worthlessness, he tossed it contemptuously aside, and waited, almost sullenly, for his breakfast.

When it came in upon the tray, carried by the brisk waiter, it looked dainty and tempting enough, and the fumes that rose from it were so savory that he grew into better humor. As it was spread before him, he perceived that the waiter had given him a very coarse, two-pronged steel fork.

"Take that away," said Ephraim, tossing it to the end of the table; "I want a silver fork."

"Silver fork, sir! Bless my soul, sir! We haven't got any; never heard of such a thing, sir."

"Never heard of a silver fork, you idiot!" shouted Ephraim; "why, everybody uses them."

"No, sir; I think not, sir. I've lived with first quality people, sir, and they all use this kind. Never saw any other kind, sir; didn't know there was any. Do they have 'em in furrin parts, sir?"

"Get out!" said Ephraim, savagely. He was becoming somewhat annoyed and bewildered by the utter disappearance of so many familiar things.

But the breakfast was good, and he was hungry, so he fell to with hearty zest, and, although he found the steel fork clumsy, it did him good service. At the conclusion of the meal, Ephraim walked rapidly to his office—the office that he had occupied for nearly sixty years. As he opened the door, he expected to find his letters in the box wherein the postman thrust them twice or thrice a day. They were not there. The box itself was gone.

"Too bad! too bad!" exclaimed Ephraim. "Everything conspires to delay me today. I suppose I must sit here and wait for that lazy letter-carrier to come, and meantime my business must wait too."

With the intent not to lose the time altogether, Ephraim resolved to write a letter or two. He took from the drawer a sheet of rough white paper, and opened his inkstand. He could not find his favorite steel pen anywhere, and there were no other pens in the drawer, only a bundle of quills. Ephraim determined to try to use one of these. He ruined four, and lost ten minutes before he could make with his knife a pen good enough to write with; but with this he finished his letter. Then he had another

hunt for an envelope, but he could find one nowhere, and nothing was to be done but to fold the sheet in the fashion that he had known in his boyhood, and to seal it with sealing-wax. He burned his fingers badly while performing the last-named operation.

Still the postman had not arrived, and Ephraim, being very anxious to mail his letter, resolved to go out and drop it into the letter-box at the corner of the street. When he reached the corner, he found that the letter-box had disappeared as so many other things had done; so he resolved to push on to the post-office, where he could leave the letter and get his morning's mail. As he approached what he had supposed was the post-office, he was dismayed to perceive that another building occupied the site. The post-office had vanished.

He turned to a man standing with a crowd which was observing him, and asked him where the post-office could be found. Obeying the direction, he sought the place and found it. Rushing to the single window, behind which a clerk stood, he asked:

"Are there any letters for Ephraim Batterby?"

"I think not," said the clerk; "there will be no mail in till tomorrow."

"Till tomorrow!" shouted Ephraim. "What is the matter?"

"The matter! nothing at all. What's the matter with you?"

"I am expecting letters from New York and Chicago. Are both mails delayed?"

"Chicago's a place I never heard of, and the

mail from New York comes in only three times a week. It came yesterday, and it will come in to-morrow."

"Three times a week!" exclaimed Ephraim; "why, it comes four or five times a day, unless I am very much mistaken."

The clerk turned to a fellow-clerk behind him and said in a low tone something at which both laughed.

"How do you suppose the mails get here four or five times a day?" asked the clerk.

"Upon the mail trains, of course," replied Ephraim, tartly; and then the clerks laughed again.

"Well, sir," said the man at the window, "we don't appear to understand each other; but it may straighten things out if I tell you that the New York mails come here upon a stage-coach, which takes twenty-four hours to make the journey, and which reaches here on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays."

Ephraim was about to make an angry reply, but the clerk shut the window and made further discussion impossible. For a moment Ephraim was puzzled. He stopped to think what he should do next, and while he was standing there, he noticed a curious crowd gathering about him, a crowd which seemed to regard him with peculiar interest. And now and then a rude fellow would make facetious comments upon Ephraim's dress, at which some of the vulgar would laugh. Ephraim was somewhat bewildered, and his confusion became greater when he observed that all of the bystanders wore

knee-breeches and very ugly high collars and cravats, in which their chins were completely buried. Ephraim perceived near to him a gentleman who held in his hand a newspaper. Encouraged by his friendly countenance, Ephraim said to him:

"I am rather confused, sir, by some unexpected changes that I have found about here this morning, will you be good enough to give me a little information?"

"With pleasure, sir."

"I have missed some important letters that I looked for from New York and the West. I wish to communicate with my correspondents at once. Will you please tell me where I can find the telegraph office?"

"The telegraph office! I don't understand you, sir."

"I wish to send messages to my friends at those points."

"Well, sir, I know of no other way to send them than through the post-office here."

"Do you mean to say that there is no telegraph line from here to New York?"

"My dear sir, what do you mean by a telegraph line?"

"A telegraph line—a line of wire on which I can send messages by electricity."

"I fear something is wrong with you, sir," said the gentleman gravely. "No such thing exists. No such thing can exist."

"Nonsense!" said Ephraim, waxing indignant. "How do you suppose the afternoon papers today

will get the quotations of the Liverpool markets of today? How will the brokers learn today the price of securities at the meeting of the London Stock Exchange this morning?"

"You are speaking very wildly, sir," said the gentleman, stepping close to Ephraim and using a low tone, while the crowd laughed. "You must be more careful, or persons will regard you as insane."

"Insane! Why? Because I tell you, what everybody knows, that we get cable news from Europe every day."

"Cable news! cable news! What does the old fool mean?" shouted the crowd.

"What do I mean!" exclaimed Ephraim, in a passion; "I mean that you are a pack of idiots for pretending to believe that there is no such thing as a telegraph, and no such thing as a telegraph cable to Europe."

The crowd sent up a shout of derisive laughter and rushed at him as if to hustle him and use him roughly. The gentleman to whom he had spoken seized him by the arm and hurried him away. When they had turned the corner, the man stopped and said to Ephraim:

"You appear to be a sane man, although you speak so strangely. Let me warn you to be more careful in the future. If you should be taken up as a madman and consigned to a madhouse, you would endure terrible suffering, and find it very difficult to secure release."

"I *am* perfectly sane," said Ephraim, "and I cannot comprehend why you think what I have said

strange. I wanted my letters, and I wished in their absence to correspond by telegraph, because I am expecting a cargo of wheat today, which I am to ship to Liverpool by steamer."

"By steamer! There you go again. Nobody can know what you mean by 'steamer.'"

"Steamer! Steamship! A ship that crosses the ocean by steam, without sails. You know what that is, certainly?"

"I have heard some talk about a rattle-trap invention which used steam to make a little boat paddle about on the river here; but as for crossing the ocean—well, my dear sir, that is a little too ridiculous."

"Ridiculous! Why——"

"Pardon me," said the man, "I see you are incorrigible; I must bid you good morning"; and he bowed politely and walked quickly away.

"Well, well!" said Ephraim, standing still and looking after him hopelessly. "It's queer, very queer. I don't begin to understand it at all, I am half inclined to believe that the world has conspired to make game of me, or else that my poor wits really are astray. I don't feel as certain of them as a clear-headed man should."

While he spoke, the bells of the city rang out an alarm of fire with furious clangor, and in a few moments he saw, dashing past him, an old-fashioned hand-engine, pulled by a score or two of men who held a rope. The burning building was not many hundred yards distant from Ephraim, and he felt an inclination to see it. When he reached the scene, men with leathern buckets were pouring water into

the engine, while other men were forcing the handles up and down, with the result that a thin stream fell upon the mass of flame.

He had an impulse to ask somebody why the steam fire-engines were not used, but every one seemed to be excited and busy, and he remembered what his friend had said to him about steamers.

So he expressed his digust for the stupidity of these people in a few muttered ejaculations; and then, suddenly, bethought him of his business.

He resolved to go down to the wharf where he had expected to ship his cargo, and to ascertain what the situation was there.

As he came near to the place, he saw that it had changed since he last saw it, but a handsome ship lay in the dock, and men were carrying bags of grain aboard of her.

"That must be my cargo," he said; "but what on earth do they mean by loading it in that manner, and upon a sailing vessel?"

He approached the man who seemed to be superintending the work, and said:

"Is this Ephraim Batterby's wheat?"

The man looked at him in surprise for a moment, and then, smiling, said:

"No, sir; it is Brown and Martin's."

"When did it arrive?"

"Yesterday."

"By rail?"

"By rail! What do you mean by that?"

"I say, did it come by rail?"

"Well, old man, I haven't the least idea what

you mean by 'rail,' but if you want to know, I'll tell you the grain came by canal-boat."

"From Chicago?"

"Never heard of Chicago. The wheat came from Pittsburgh. What are you asking for, any way?"

"Why, I'm expecting some myself, by rail from Chicago, and I intend to ship it to Liverpool in a steamer—that is," added Ephraim, hesitatingly, "if I can find one."

"Chicago! rail! steamer! Old chap, I'm afraid you're a little weak in the top story. What do you mean by Chicago?"

"Chicago! Why, it's a city three or four hundred miles west of Pittsburgh; a great center for the western grain traffic. Certainly you must have heard of it."

"Oh, come now, old man, you're trying to guy me! I know well enough that the country is a howling wilderness, three hundred miles beyond Pittsburgh. Grain market! That's good!"

"I don't know," said Ephraim, somewhat feebly. "It used to be there. And I expected a cargo of wheat from Chicago to be here this morning, by railroad."

"What kind of a railroad?"

"A railroad: iron rails, with cars propelled with steam! I expected to find an elevator here to put the grain on board of an iron vessel; to load the whole twenty thousand bushels today; but things have gone wrong somehow, and I don't understand precisely why."

"Bill," said the man, turning to a young fellow, one of his assistants, near him, "trot this poor old chap up to the mayor's office, so that he'll be taken care of. He's talking to me about bringing twenty thousand bushels of wheat on a rail, and loading it in an iron vessel—an iron vessel, mind you—in one day! It's a shame for the old fellow's relations to let him wander about alone."

Before "Bill" had a chance to offer his assistance, Ephraim, alarmed, and more than ever bewildered, walked quickly away.

As he gained the street, a man of about middle age suddenly stopped in front of him and said:

"Good morning, Mr. Batterby."

Ephraim had got into such a frame of mind that he was almost startled at the sound of his own name.

He looked hard at the stranger but, although the features were somewhat familiar, he could not really recognize the man.

"Don't know me, Batterby? Impossible! Don't know Tony Miller!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Ephraim; "Tony Miller! so it is! Tony Miller! Not Tony Miller? Why—why—why, Miller, I thought you died thirty years ago!"

"Died! ha, ha! Not a bit of it, man. Why, it's absurd! I saw you only two or three weeks since!"

"Strange, strange!" said Ephraim almost sadly, in his mind trying to recall some fragments of the past. "I could have sworn that you were dead!"

"No, sir; just as hearty and lively as I ever was

By the way, Mr. Batterby, what has become of Ephraim? I don't see him about any more."

"Ephraim? Ephraim Batterby? Why, who do you think I am?"

"Joshua Batterby, of course; who else? You don't seem very well today, I think."

"He mistakes me for my father," said Ephraim to himself. "When will all this wild, puzzling mystery end?" Then, addressing Miller, he said, "I should like to have some conversation with you, Miller; I am strangely confused and upset today."

"Certainly; be glad to have a chat with you. I say, suppose you come home and dine with me? I am on my way to dinner now. Will you go?"

"Gladly," replied Ephraim.

As they walked on, Miller, with intent to break the silence said:

"I think we shall have rain today, Mr. Batterby."

"Perhaps; it looks like it. What does the signal service say?"

"What does the *what* say?"

"The signal service. What are the indications?"

"I haven't the least idea what you mean, Mr. Batterby."

"Why," said Ephraim, timidly, "were you not aware that a bureau in the War Department collects information which enables it to indicate approaching conditions of the weather, and that it gives this information to the newspapers?"

"Never heard of such a thing, Mr. Batterby, and I don't believe it. Somebody has been joking with you. The only weather indications we have are in the almanacs, and they are not at all trustworthy."

The two walked along in silence for a time, and then Ephraim said:

"Miller!"

"Well?"

"I am going to ask you a good many queer questions today, for a private purpose of my own; will you agree to answer them candidly?"

"If I can."

"And not think me insane, or absurd, or stupid?"

"Of course I should not think so."

"Very well," said Ephraim; "and when we are done, I may explain why I asked them, and perhaps you can solve a mystery for me."

They reached the house and entered it. The first thing Miller did was to proceed to the sideboard, fill two glasses with wine from a decanter, and ask Ephraim to drink.

"Thank you," said Ephraim, "I never touch it."

Miller looked at him for a moment in amazement. He concluded that this must be one of the phases of Batterby's newly-developed queerness. So he emptied his own glass and put it down.

They entered the parlor to wait for dinner. Ephraim's eye was caught by a very pretty miniature on the wall.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"Mrs. Miller; my wife."

"Is it a photograph?"

"I don't know what a photograph is."

"Ah!" sighed Ephraim, "I remember. Let me ask you something else. Did you ever hear of a place named Chicago?"

"Never! there is no such place."

"You know nothing of railroads, or steamships, or telegraphs?"

"You are talking Greek to me."

"Did you ever hear of a telegraph cable to Europe?"

"Well, you *are* asking queer questions, sure enough. No, I never did."

"Is there, or is there not, a railway line across the continent to the Pacific?"

"What a funny kind of an idea! No, there isn't."

"Are there any such things as daily papers?"

"No, sir."

"One question more: I see you have a wood fire. Do you never burn coal?"

"Charcoal, sometimes, for some purposes."

"I mean hard coal—stone coal?"

"There is no such thing in existence, so far as I know. What are you up to, anyhow? Going to invent something?"

"I will tell you after awhile, maybe," replied Ephraim; and then to himself he said, "I am beginning to catch the meaning of all this experience. How strange it is!"

A lady entered from the front door, and passed the parlor. Ephraim saw that she had on a very narrow dress, with a high waist almost beneath her armpits, that she wore upon her head an enormous and hideous green "calash" which bore some resemblance to a gig-top.

He had not seen one of those wonderful bits of head-gear for fifty years.

In a few moments the lady entered the parlor.

As Mr. Miller presented Batterby to his wife, Ephraim was shocked to perceive that she seemed to have on but a single, thin, white garment, and that even this appeared to be in immediate danger of slipping downward. He thought it shockingly immodest, but he remembered the figures of women he had seen in the remote past, and thought he knew what this meant. So he gave no indication of surprise.

They went to the dining-room. Ephraim was very careful in conducting his share of the conversation. Mrs. Miller, unlike her husband, had not been forewarned. However, once, when she was lamenting the absence of fruits and vegetables from the markets in winter, Ephraim incautiously asked her why she did not use canned goods; and this opened the way to some vexatious questions. A little later, Miller began talking about the Warners, people whom Ephraim in his soul knew had been dead forty years; and Miller had mentioned that two of them were down with small-pox. Thereupon Ephraim asked if the malady was prevalent, and if Miller had been vaccinated. And thus again he got into trouble, for neither his host nor hostess knew his meaning. He was tripped up again by a reference to sewing-machines; and finally, by remarking, innocently, when Miller observed that it had just begun to rain, that he was sorry he had not his rubbers with him.

But he would not try to explain his meaning when they pressed him. He had, indeed, an increasing tendency to taciturnity. He shrank more and more from the thought of attempting a discussion of the situation in which some wondrous mischance had

placed him. As Miller waxed boisterous and lively in his talk, Ephraim was strongly impelled to complete reserve.

For he had creeping over him, gradually, a horrible feeling that these people, in whose company he was lingering, were not real people; that they were dead, and that by some awful jugglery they had been summoned forth and compelled to play over, before him, a travesty of their former lives.

He became gloomy and wretched beneath the oppression of the thoughts that crowded his brain. As the hour slipped away, his distress was made more intense by the conduct of Miller, who, warmed with wine, mingled oaths with his conversation. Ephraim felt as if that blasphemy came to him clothed with a new horror from the region of mystery beyond the grave. Finally, after Mrs. Miller had left the room, her husband's utterance became thick and harsh, and presently he slipped, drunken and helpless, beneath the table.

Ephraim sat alone at the board. The room grew darker, for the rain was now swirling without, against the window-panes. There was something ghastly and fearful in the appearance of the apartment. The outlines of the furniture, seen through the dusk, were distorted and misshapen. Ephraim felt as if he were in the presence of phantoms. He had the sensations of one who sits in a charnel-house and knows that he is the only living thing among the dead.

His good sense half revolted against the fear that overspread him; but it seemed not strong

enough to quell the tremulous terror in his soul; for that grew and grew until it filled him with a kind of panic. He had such a meaningless dread as the bravest know when they find themselves amid darkness and loneliness in a dwelling wherein, of late, have been pleasant company and merriment and laughter; wherein has been joyousness that has suddenly been quenched by dismal silence.

He was seized by a sudden impulse to fly. He pushed away his chair, and glanced timorously around him. Then he trod swiftly, and with a fiercely-beating heart, to the hall-way. Grasping his hat from the table, he opened the door, and fled out into the tempest.

As he sped away through the gloomy street, now wet and slippery, and covered with pools of rain, it smote his heart with a new fear to think that even the city about him, with its high walls and impending roofs, its bricks and stones and uplifting spires, was unreal to ghastliness. But even his great dread did not forbid his mind to recall the mysteries of the day.

"I know," he said, as he rushed onward, "what it all means. This is the Past. Some mighty hand has swept away the barrier of years, and plunged me once more into the midst of the life that I knew in my youth, long ago. And I have loved and worshipped that past. Blind and foolish man! I loved it! Ah, how I hate it now! What a miserable, miserable time it was! How poor and insufficient life seems under its conditions! How meanly men crawled about, content with their littleness and folly, and unconscious of the wisdom that lay within

their reach, ignorant of the vast and wonderful possibilities that human ingenuity might compass!"

"There was nothing in that dreary past that I could love, excepting"—and Ephraim was almost ready to weep as he thought that the one longing of his soul could not be realized—"excepting those who were torn from my arms, my heart, my home, by the cruel hand of death."

The excitement, the distress, the anguish, the wild terror of the day, came back to him with accumulated force as he hurried along the footway; and when he reached his own home he was distracted, unnerved, hysterical.

With eager but uncertain fingers he pushed open the front door, and went into his sitting-room. There a fresh shock came to him, for he saw his wife in the chair she had occupied in the old time, long, long ago. She arose to greet him, and he saw that her dear face wore the kindly smile he had known so well and that had added much to his sum of happiness in the years that were gone. He leaped to clasp her in his arms when he heard the sweet tones of her voice welcoming him; his eyes filled with tears, and the sobs came, as he said:

"Ah, my dearest, my dearest! have you, too, come up from the dead past to meet me? It was you alone that hallowed it to me. I loved—loved you—I——"

He felt his utterance choked, the room swam before him, there was a ringing noise in his ears, he felt himself falling; then he lost consciousness.

He knew nothing more until he realized that

there was a gentle knocking near to him, as of some one who demanded admittance at the door. He roused himself with an effort, and almost mechanically said:

"Come in."

He heard a light step, and he opened his eyes. He was in his own bedroom, the room of the present, not of the past, and in his own bed. It was Nelly who knocked at the door; she stood beside him.

"It is time to get up, Grandpa," she said.

"Wh—where am I? What has happened?" Then, as his mind realized the truth, he said, "Oh, Nelly, Nelly, how I have suffered!"

"How, Grandpa?"

"I—I—but never mind now, my dear; I will tell you after awhile. Run downstairs while I prepare for breakfast. But, Nelly, let me tell you not to believe what I said to you about the glories of the past; it was not true, my child, not true. I have learned better; I talked to you like a foolish old man. Thank God, my dear, that you live later in the world's history. No man is more unwise or more ungrateful than he who finds delight in playing the part of An Old Fogy."

## IX

## THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

"AS fur the 'Flying Dutchman,' " said William Potsherd, the venerable mariner, sitting in the reading-room of the Seamen's Mission after the monthly meeting, and striking the table with the palm of his hand, "they needn't tell me there ain't none, fur I seen her with me own eyes and sailed on her.

"It was that time I was telling you about, when I was fus' mate of the steamer 'Indian King,' and the cyclone capsized her, and I clutched a boat as I came up, and clumb into her. Then I seen Em'ly Smith, the cap'n's colored stewardess, floating about, and I fished her out, and we found ourselves alone on the boiling sea.

"So we run along fur sixteen hours, me and Em'ly Smith. She was black; black and fat. But she was cheerful. She belonged to the Sons and Daughters and Brothers and Sisters of Aaron, of the Tribe of Levi, of Rising Sun, Philadelphia, and she sung them camp-meeting hymns to keep up my sperrits; and it did keep them up. As I set there a-looking at her, I says to myself: 'If the wust comes to the wust, most likely it's going to be my luck to have to eat you, Em'ly; fur when the choice is between an able seaman, as a useful member of society, and a plain cook, there ain't no choice.

"But after a while I seen a queer-looking craft coming towards me with all sails set, and I thought she'd run us down; but I ketched at the stay-chains as she reached me, and, tying the painter of the boat to them, I was on deck in a minute, and then I lifted Em'ly Smith out.

"I dunno how to tell you what that craft looked like. A kind o' dusky red all over her decks and her sails and her bulwarks, and the red a kind o' soft glow like the head of a match in a dark room. I never seen nothing jus' like it afore or since, excepting it was punk out in the woods; only that ain't red, and this ship was red and sort o' dim, shiny-like frum stem to stern. And she flew through the water faster'n any steamer you ever seen.

"Well, sir, I'm no coward, but I own up I was skeered with the look o' the boat; and not a man in sight on deck, not even at the hellum; the sails jus' a-bulging and the vessel a-whipping over the sea, the same's if she was a bird.

"So then I seen a light or something a-shining through a crack in the cabin aft, and I says to Em'ly Smith:

" 'Now, Em'ly, you just set there on that bucket till I look around and investigate'; and I made my way boldly to the cabin, and went down and shoved the door open and walked right in, ezzackly 's if I was the skipper himself.

"There was two men a-setting at the table in there, the queerest dressed you ever seen, and they was a-playing some kind o' game with cards that was so black they might 've been made of charcoal fur all the difference I could see.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

"Then one o' the men who set a-facing me looks up just as he was going to play a card; and when he seen me, he says:

" 'Well, you *have* nerve! Where did you come frum? Where's your manners? Don't you know this is private?'

"Then I ups and tells him, and fur a minute he looks at me 's if he'd half a mind to chuck me overboard, and then he says:

" 'What's your name?'

" 'William Potsherd, mariner,' says I, 'of Tom's River, New Jersey,' and then I explains to him how I happened to drop in on him; but leaving out the particulars about Em'ly Smith.

" 'Set down, William,' says he, after reflecting for a little while. 'I'm Cap'n Schmitt, the skipper o' this yer craft, and this is my fus' leftenant, Vanderwerken.'

"But the fus' leftenant seemed sour about something, fur he jus' looks at me and scowls; and when I took a chair, he went over into the corner by the cupboard and scowled wuss and wuss.

" 'And so you thought you'd ship with us for the v'yage, did you, William?' says Cap'n Schmitt, with a grim smile on his face—a face all scarred and gashed with wrinkles. Why, when you looked at it, he seemed 's if he might be a thousand years old or more.

" 'I dunno,' says I, 'about no v'yage. That depends where you're bound to,' says I.

" 'Bound!' he says, half a-larfing. 'We're bound to Tartaroo,' says he, 'if you know where that is, and we're a long time a-gitting there.'

"'Where're you frum?' says I.

"'Where're we frum, Vanderwerken?' says he, a-turning to his fus' leftenant and larfing three-quarters this time.

"But Vanderwerken jus' scowled and grunted and grunted and scowled and said nothing. Then the Cap'n looks at me ag'in serious, and says:

"'Never you mind, William, where we're frum. It's so long ago I've almost clean forgot.

"'Don't you keep a log?" says I.

"'Why, dog gone it, William,' says Cap'n Schmitt, 'I've writ and writ till I reckon I've about wore out the alphabet. I've writ all over the cabin walls and the furniture and the poop-deck and the sails! Log! I give her up,' says he, 'more'n a hundred years ago.'

"'And that's a good while, too,' says I, jus' to be kind o' sociable.

"'I've been a-sailing yer since 1644,' says he. 'Sometimes it seems to me like a million years, and then ag'in sometimes it seems 's if it begun only last Tuesday a week. My head's got queer over it,' says he, 'so that really I'm not jus' sure if I'm real or unreal. Would you mind poking me with your finger, and telling me what you think?'

"So, jus' to obleege him, I jabs him a couple of times in the cheek and the shoulder, and I says to him:

"'Cap'n Schmitt, in my opinion you're not real real. You're about like tallow or cheese; you give when I poke you.'

"'Half real and half unreal, s'spos'n we say,' says he. 'Maybe so. I'm not flesh and I'm not sperrit. That's my view, too. What d'you think o' that,

Vanderwerken?' says he, a-turning once more to his fus' leftenant. But the fus' leftenant he sniffles and scowls and looks at the cabin roof and declines to answer.

"'Where did I understand you to say you hail frum, William?' says Cap'n Schmitt.

"'Tom's River,' says I.

"'And where's that?"

"I told him; and when I mentioned Barnegat Bay, I seen him kind o' flinch, and I knowed why before I left him.

"That's in the United States, and the United States is the greatest country on this earth,' says I; and then knowing he hadn't heard any news lately, I went on and told him about General Washington and the Revolution.

"'General Washington?' he says, trying to remember. 'Was that the man that was left, a little baby, in the bulrushes?'

"'No, no!' says I. 'He was fust in peace, fust in war, and fust in the hearts of his countrymen. You've got your mind on Moses.'

"'Hah!' says he, 'maybe I have. I get mixed on people somehow, nowadays. And how is things, William, amongst the folks on shore? I git to hankering after 'em now and then. And speaking of babies—ah, William!' says he to me, a red tear a-rolling over the crinkles on his face, 'what wouldn't I give to see one o' them ag'in? Tell me, William, do they still smile when the angels speaks to 'em in their sleep, and take notice, and all that kind o' thing, jus' the way they used to?'

"'Jus' the same,' says I; 'and shake their rattles and chew their gum-rings, and cry and keep the folks awake at nights. Jus' the very same.'

"I seen a flim gathering on his eyes as I spoke, and so I went on and told him about my baby grandson and his golden hair and blue eyes, and two lovely white front teeth and his cherry lips, until presently Cap'n Schmitt waves his hand at me and says:

"'Stop, William! Stop that! I can't stand it another minute!"

"Then he heaved a deep sigh, and he was about to speak when he caught sight o' Vanderwerken standing there in the corner. The Cap'n had something on his mind that he wanted to talk to me about private, and so he says:

"'Vanderwerken, jus' run up on deck for a few minutes and look at the glass, and see if we're in the Tropic of Capricorn or in Cancer.'

"Vanderwerken said he wouldn't go, and so Cap'n Schmitt flew at him and gripped him, and they had it over and over the cabin floor, until directly Cap'n Schmitt doubled Vanderwerken all up, jus' 's if he was putty, and flung him out and bolted the door. Through the window I seen Vanderwerken a-laying there, gradually coming back to shape ag'in, fust one dent bulging out and then another, jus' like one o' them rubber doll-babies, you know.

"Cap'n Schmitt then sets down ag'in by the table, and he says to me:

"'William, I'm a-beginning to git tired o' this kind o' thing. Here I've been a-setting and playing seven-up with Vanderwerken fur two hundred years,

"I Cussed the Thunderstorm"

and it's gitting to wear on me—Vanderwerken won't learn to play checkers; and so I'm yearning fur land and sunlight and the comforts o' home, and seeing you makes me want 'em wuss. If I could once git ashore in a new place and begin life over ag'in, I believe I could live down my past. Don't you think I could, William?'

"'I dunno,' says I. 'because I dunno nothing about your past.'

"'Don't you know,' says he, 'what's the reason this yer ship keeps a-flying over the seas? It was this way: In 1644, while I was a-trying to take the ship around the Horn, there was an awful thunderstorm that kep' a-driving us back and nearly capsized us. It made me so mad that I stood out on the poop-deck and took off my hat and cussed the thunder-storm; and because I did that I was condemned to keep flying over the seas and never to come to port. Tough luck, William, don't you think, jus' fur cussin' at one little thunderstorm?'

"'Why don't you repent?' says I.

"'Repent, William?' says he. 'What's the good of repenting when repenting won't take off the cuss that was put on me? No, sir, if repenting would 've lifted it, it would 've been lifted long ago.'

"'And what will lift it?' says I.

"Cap'n Schmitt looked around to see if Vanderwerken was a-listening, and then, very solemn, he says: 'There's only one thing, William, that'll do the business, and that is fur a fair young maiden to marry me. And now look at it—if I can find a fair young maiden to marry me, the cuss will be removed; but,

don't you see, I'm not 'lowed to go ashore to find a fair young maiden and to court her and to ask her—and there you are, blocked at both ends; no chance one way or another. Do you think that's a square deal on me, William? Blamed if I do. So what I want to do is to find that girl somehow and marry her and settle down and make a fresh start. Can you think how you could help me, William?'

"'Settling down's all right,' says I, 'and starting fresh's all right, too, but I don't know about marrying.' Then I looks him over and says: 'Because girls is more particular now than they used to be. You're no longer young, you know. Did you say 1644? Well, Cap'n Schmitt, you're two hundred and fifty if you're a day, and that would seem old to most girls.'

"'I know it,' says he, 'but I'm not so bad-looking, William, now, am I?' And besides' (and then he looked around ag'in to find if Vanderwerken was a-lurking by the door), 'I'm jus' a-rolling in wealth.'

"'You are?' says I.

"'Jus' a-rolling in it.'

"'What are you wuth?' says I, fur that very minute it come into my mind like a flash of lightning that him and Em'ly Smith might fix up a match betwixt em' if there was anything in it for me.

"'What am I wuth?' says Cap'n Schmitt. 'Well, maybe I can't put it in straight figures or in fractions, but, I pledge you my word I have billions of dollars and tons of diamonds and jewelry, to say nothing of fus' mortgages and Government bonds; more'n you can count,' says he.

"'Big talk,' I says, 'never went fur with me, Cap'n Schmitt. Seeing's believing, and nothing else is. Where is this stuff?'

"'It's buried,' says he, 'buried good and tight.'

"'Buried for good, you mean,' says I, just to draw him on.

"'Buried on the beach of Barnegat Bay,' says he, 'but buried where you can't find it without the chart; and I've got the chart. Howsomedever,' says he, 'the half of it goes to the man who finds the girl that will have me.'

"'Do you mean that, Cap'n Schmitt?' says I.

"'I'll write it and sign it and seal it,' says he. 'Half's enough for me if I have love's young dream along with it.'

"'Cap'n Schmitt,' says I, 'it comes to my mind that maybe I can help you out. But before we strike a bargain, tell me if you prefer a blonde or a brunette?'

"'It don't make no great difference,' says he, a-waving his hand; 'but brunettes is my favorites.'

"'Dark brunettes, or tollably light brunettes?'

"'Rather dark,' says he; 'but I don't care fur freckles.'

"'I think I know one that'll suit you,' says I.

"'I make no p'int about beauty,' says he. 'I want her to be soulful. Her soul must look out of her eyes. Her heart must throb in unison with mine —throb for throb. Git me such a wife as that, William, and half the treasure is yourn and welcome.'

"'Give me a glance at that chart, jus' for a minute, Cap'n, will you?' says I.

"Cap'n Schmitt turned around to get the chart

out of the locker, when suddenly he dropped his hands and said:

"'What is that? D'ye hear that?'

"I heard it well enough. Em'ly Smith, out there in the forecastle, had struck up and was singing 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,' and she sung it fine, too.

"'Oh, that's nothing,' says I, fur I wanted to get my hands on the chart and to have the contract signed before I introduced him to Em'ly. 'That's Vanderwerken,' says I.

"'Vanderwerken's grandmother!' he says, wild with excitement. 'You have to steady yourself ag'in something when Vanderwerken sings. That's an angel, or I'm no judge. Let me get out o' that door.'

"'Cap'n Schmitt,' says I, putting myself betwixt him and the door, 'I don't want no trouble, but you can't pass me till I see that chart.'

"His eyes flamed fire, and he looked like a fiend as he drawed his cutlass and made at me. But I picks up a chair, and I says to him: 'Now, steady, steady, my man! Don't try no game o' bluff with me. Hand out that chart.'

"'I'll kill you!' says he, making a pass at me. 'Git out o' my way!' He struck at me, but I ketched the blade on the leg o' the chair.

"'You can't skeer me,' says I. 'What are you, anyway? You're nothing but a sceptre; and if I couldn't whip a sceptre, I'd be ashamed to go home and meet my relations.'

"He seen I meant business, so then he begun to halloa for Vanderwerken.

"'Never mind Vanderwerken,' says I. 'The door's locked; and if it wasn't, I'm not afeared o' Vanderwerken.'

"Just then we ketched the sound o' Em'ly Smith's voice ag'in. She was on the eleventh verse of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.' Cap'n Schmitt dropped the p'int of his cutlass and listened.

"'Heavenly, ain't it?' says he.

"'Yes,' says I, 'heavenly it is. And that's the girl I had in my mind fur you if you'd only play fair about that Barnegat Bay business. I never see such a fool as you—a-throwing away the only chance you're ever likely to git.'

"Then Cap'n Schmitt begun to quiet down, and he says:

"'She come along with you, did she?'

"'She did,' says I. 'I'm her protector; and I'm a-going to protect her, too.'

"'I'll tell you, William,' says he, 'what I'll do. Give me a look at her; and if I fancy her, half the treasure's yourn.'

"'No,' says I; 'I'm a-taking no chances. Give me the chart or lose Em'ly.'

"'Is that her name?' says he. 'Em'ly! I always thought it lovely. Em'ly what?'

"'Smith,' says I; 'pretty much the same name as yourn. Hardly any trouble to change it.'

"Cap'n Schmitt begun to think; and while he was setting there thinking, the thirtenth verse came a-floating in the cabin window, and it was clear to me something or other was making Em'ly Smith do her best. She sung like a canary. As her voice

died away Cap'n Schmitt got up and went to the cupboard and takes out the chart and hands it to me and says:

" 'William, I'll do it! But you'll divide even with me if you get there fust? Give me your hand on it.' And so I shook hands with him, and then we went on deck.

"There was a kind o' half gloom, so's you couldn't see things quite plain. I glanced at the binnacle, and found the compass a-p'inting jus' the way the ship was a-going. It always did that. Then I looked at my watch, and it was jus' midnight. The works was a-going, but the hands never moved from twelve whilst I was on that ship. Fur away in the forecastle I could see the whites of Em'ly Smith's eyes as we moved towards her.

"There she was, still a-singing, and Vanderwerken set aside her on another bucket. He had a-holt of her hand, and his eyes was shet, and he was jus' a-drinking in the music, perfectly happy.

"So when we come near, Cap'n Schmitt whispers to me:

" 'She's somewhat darker than I expected.'

" 'It's the gloom,' I says. 'She shows off better in the daylight.'

" 'And I don't see,' says he, 'how we can honestly call her a fair young maiden; and that's the kind, you remember, that I have to have to lift the cuss.'

" 'She's thirty-six,' says I; 'and that's very young compared with two hundred and fifty; and as fur fair, what I think is that she has to be fair in the sense that she'll play fair—jus' be honest, you know; and Em'ly Smith'll do that every time.'

"Em'ly Smith stopped singing jus' then, and Vanderwerken, keeping his eyes shet, says: 'More! more! let's have some more, Em'ly.' So then Em'ly Smith starts in on the fifteenth verse; and as she drawed to the end of it, Cap'n Schmitt stepped over and kicked the bucket frum underneath Vanderwerken, dropping him on the deck.

"Then Cap'n Schmitt says to her:

" 'Which verse was that, Em'ly?'

" 'The fifteenth,' says she.

" 'Now give us the sixteenth,' says he, and so Em'ly begun on the sixteenth.

"When she stopped, Cap'n Schmitt drawed me over to one side, and says to me: 'I think maybe we can make a trade, William. Em'ly wouldn't be jus' my fus' choice, but still there's a charm about her, particularly about her singing. I'm a little shy with girls,' says he. 'Would you mind opening out the subject to her fur me?'

"So I sets down alongside of Em'ly, on Vanderwerken's bucket, whilst Capn' Schmitt goes to the bulwark and looks over; and whilst Em'ly was a good deal set up by Cap'n Schmitt's offer, she felt she was obleeged to decline it. She said she was already engaged to Arcturus Williams, the President of the Sons and Daughters and Brothers and Sisters of Aaron, of the Tribe of Levi, of Rising Sun, Philadelphia; and that, anyhow, even if she was willing to throw Arcturus over, she should feel like going a little slow about marrying a man who seemed to her to be half sceptre and half pirate.

"Of course, I daresn't say this to Cap'n Schmitt,

or there'd be trouble right off, and the Barnegat Bay treasure would never come my way, so I had to resort to duplicity.

"Calling Cap'n Schmitt over by the forecastle scuttle, I says to him:

"'Em'ly says she prefers Vanderwerken.'

"He was pretty mad. 'I'll have to keel-haul Vanderwerken yet,' says he.

"'But Em'ly has a kind heart, and she's willing to sacrifice her feelings to lift the cuss frum you; only she must have conditions.'

"'What conditions?' says Cap'n Schmitt.

"'She promised her ma afore she left home that if she ever got married, she wouldn't have any parson to marry her but Brother Wiley of the Brick Church; and if you're willing to wait till she can git him, she's yourn with love and kind regards.'

"'That's not unreasonable,' says Cap'n Schmitt; 'but what I want to know is: How am I and Brother Wiley and Em'ly Smith going to come together?'

"So we talked it over fur a while, and finally Cap'n Schmitt agreed that me and Em'ly should try to git ashore, and hunt up Brother Wiley, and meet Cap'n Schmitt's ship three miles off Barnegat Light on the fifteenth of March, at twelve o'clock midnight ezzackly.

"Then we shook hands all around, and Cap'n Schmitt tenderly kissed Em'ly good-bye. As I helped her over the side into our boat, I handed the Barnegat Bay chart to Cap'n Schmitt to hold fur a minute; and when all was ready, he put the chart at me and says:

"'Promise me now, William, that you will divide fair; but don't cross your breath to it, fur that won't go here!'

"Well, sir, I don't know what made me do it, but afore I could take the chart out of his hands I crossed my breath, and that very minute there was a loud BANG! and I was whirled round and round in the air and became unconscious.

"When I come to, I found myself laying in one end of the boat, whilst Em'ly Smith set in the other end singing softly to herself the nineteenth verse of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.' The sun was jus' a-gitting up, and the flood tide was a-sweeping the boat into Delaware Bay. Well, we run ashore at Cape May, and Em'ly and me come home on the train. But both she and Brother Wiley backed dead out on the fifteenth of March, and on the sixteenth she married President Arcturus Williams, of Rising Sun.

"As for that Barnegat Bay treasure, there it's a-laying and there it'll go on a-laying, whilst William Potsherd, who might 've been a millionaire. can't rub two dollars together."

# X

## MR. SKINNER'S NIGHT IN THE UNDERWORLD

IN the reading-room of a hotel at Eisenach, Central Germany, Mr. Bartholomew G. Skinner, of Squan, New Jersey, United States of America, sat with his feet upon the edge of a table.

Mr. Skinner had acquired a fortune at Squan. He began as a keeper of a summer hotel, and with money earned in this business he had engaged in speculations in land upon a large scale. Having bought up vast tracts of "pine barrens" in West Jersey—great stretches of sandy loam, on which grew nothing but stunted pines, scrub oaks, and huckleberry bushes; he cleared them, laid out farms and villages, invited immigration, and advertised far and wide over the civilized earth the cheapness of his lands, the fertility of the soil, and the healthfulness of the climate. People came, saw, bought and took up their residences there; and so it came to pass that while Mr. Skinner amassed a fortune, thirty or forty thousand persons acquired cheap homes, beautiful towns dotted the former desert, and vines, and peach-trees, and waving grain stood in luxuriant growth where nature had for centuries supplied nothing but vegetation that was useless to man.

Mr. Skinner was, in a high and noble sense, a benefactor of his race. The man who turns a great wil-

derness into a lovely garden, as he did, deserves even a richer reward than he counted when he summed up his profits.

Mr. Skinner was traveling through Europe for enjoyment. He was a man who had had little education in his boyhood; but he had read much, and thought much; and concerning the practical affairs of life he was fairly well informed. He was a practical man, and he prided himself upon the fact. There was no nonsense about him, and not a great deal of sentiment, excepting that which has a basis of solid common sense. The natural movement of his mind was always toward the bottom facts; and where a matter was clearly within human ken he never accepted theory, or tradition, or guesswork, but proceeded to examine it for himself in his own way, and to form his own conclusions.

The contempt entertained by Mr. Skinner for some of the methods, ideas, and superstitions which he encountered during his journeying, could hardly be expressed, and he did not often try. He fully realized that everybody's way could not be his way; that large allowance must be made for differences of condition in which men are brought up, and that only a fool goes through the world condemning aloud everything that does not conform to his standard. But Mr. Skinner was not a silent man. He liked to talk, and he talked with directness and confidence. He was utterly simple, and without affectation—so much so, that those who had been accumstomed to stand in awe of persons whom Mr. Skinner never hesitated to regard with easy familiarity, mistook for

rudeness what was really nothing but absolute unconsciousness that there was any occasion for a manifestation of reverence. A man of intense simplicity is apt to give great offence to those who are keenly sensitive to the requirements of a very artificial etiquette; and Mr. Skinner often did so. But he never willingly offended, for a kinder heart than his never beat in a human bosom.

Mr. Skinner was reading a book as he sat with his feet nearly as high as his head. It was a Traveler's Guide, and the passage that interested him at that moment described the Horselberg, just beyond Eisenach, and told in a very prosy way the wonderful story of Tannhäuser.

Mr. Skinner had never encountered that legend before. He read it through twice, first hurriedly, and then more carefully. Then he turned the book over upon the table rose from his chair, and went to the window.

He looked out, and there, in full view, was the very mountain alluded to in the story. Mr. Skinner stood for several minutes gazing at it, with his hands behind his back. He appeared to be considering something. Presently he turned about and rang the bell. When the waiter appeared, Mr. Skinner said to him in English:

"What mountain is that, over there?"

"The Horselberg, sir."

"Is that the hill Tannhäuser went into?"

"Yes, sir; so they say."

"You've read about it, have you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you believe that story?"

"Oh, I don't know, sir. I think I do. Everybody here believes it."

"Ever been over there?"

"Many a time, sir."

"To the place where Tannhäuser got in?"

"That's what they say, sir."

"I want you to take me to that spot."

"All right, sir; when?"

"Late this afternoon. I want to get there by the shortest known route."

"Very well, sir."

"You come into this room at seven o'clock precisely, and I'll be ready."

"Yes, sir," said the man, as he withdrew.

As Mr. Skinner walked back to the window to take another look at the mountain, he said to himself:

"If there's anything in that story I'm going to find it out. If Tannhäuser could get in, why can't I get in? And if I do get in, I'll bet a dollar I'll play a better hand than he played, see if I don't!"

Then Mr. Skinner sat down by the table and began his eleventh letter to the *Barnegat Advertiser*, the newspaper through which he conveyed to the people at home his impressions of Europe.

At seven o'clock Mr. Skinner was in the room equipped for his undertaking. He had a traveler's satchel containing a few articles swung over his shoulder; he had placed a loaded revolver in his pocket; upon his arm was a light overcoat, and in his hand he carried an umbrella.

Presently the servant entered, and ordering him

to lead the way, Mr. Skinner started, stopping for a moment as he went out to address a note to the proprietor of the hotel, who was temporarily absent.

After a long walk, and some rather stiff climbing, the goal was reached.

"This is the place, is it?" asked Mr. Skinner.

"Yes, sir!"

"Humph! Well, you can go home now," said Mr. Skinner, putting a bit of money into the man's hand.

"Not going back with me, sir?"

"No; I intend to stay here all night. I'll return in the morning, most likely. You needn't wait."

The man looked at him with mingled amazement and curiosity, but as it was plainly apparent from Mr. Skinner's manner that he was not convulsed by extraordinary emotion of any kind, and was neither contemplating suicide, nor likely to be much affected by supernaturual manifestations if any should appear, the man turned slowly about and began to retrace his steps.

It was early twilight, and Mr. Skinner's first act was to take a look at the place. It was upon the mountain's side, a sort of a small plateau, covered with grass and a sparse underbrush. The mountain rose high and black above him, bare and rugged on the top. Trees were thickly clustered upon each side of the plateau, and beneath him in front the ground sloped away somewhat precipitously, its sides clothed with verdure, excepting here and there where the rain had washed the earth into gullies, or the stones had slid downward and marked their narrow paths by stripping away the grass.

Out beyond the base of the mountain he could perceive through the gathering dusk the indistinct outlines of the town, with now and then a light shining from a window.

Mr. Skinner admitted to himself that the loneliness of the place was somewhat oppressive; but he was in search of truth, and he had not expected to be quite so confortable as he would have been at the hotel.

It grew darker, and the air became chilly. Mr. Skinner put on his overcoat; then he threw his umbrella upon the ground, seated himself upon it, and lighted a cigar. Upon the whole it was not disagreeable; there was a flavor of adventure about it which pleased him.

As the darkness deepened the lights in the town increased in number, and he even thought he could distinguish his hotel by the glow about the front windows.

It was a magnificent night. The stars twinkled brightly as he looked up at them, and he felt a good deal of satisfaction in recognizing most of the constellations. Those were the very planets that he used to study from his own front porch at Squan. They had an air of old acquaintanceship which was delightful. He had not seen anything since he left the States that reminded him so strongly of home. It was a little odd to think of those heavenly bodies sweeping over Squan, missing him, and after crossing the continent and the Pacific Ocean finding him sitting on his umbrella out here on a wild mountain in Germany.

The damp earth and the heavy odors of the vege-

tation about him brought up peculiar recollections also. We remember smells longer than anything else in our experience. The Horselberg, on that calm and peaceful night, had the odors that greeted his nostrils on the second night at Gettysburg, when he lay upon the hillside, in the dusk, with his regiment, too weary of blood and carnage even to think of to-morrow's battle, which would bring death to thousands about him, and woe to other thousands far away from the battlefield.

And so he mused and smoked, and smoked and mused, as the hours went slowly by. Once or twice he caught himself nodding; and then he would rise and walk about a little space to rouse himself.

At last, however, his thoughts became confused, and he knew no more until suddenly he was conscious of the faint reverberations of a distant town clock. He counted the strokes mechanically, and there were TWELVE.

He had been asleep quite an hour. He was about to get up and walk again, when he heard a noise close to him, very faint, but distinct and musical. In a moment he saw that the turf about him was lighted by a glow softer and less clear than moonlight; and he perceived that a host of tiny figures capered about amid the grass.

All of his senses instantly were upon the alert. He pressed his finger-nails strongly against his palm, to be sure that he was not dreaming. No, he was wide awake—he thought himself sure of that; and although he felt a most intense curiosity, and he realized that his heart was beating with accelerated motion, he was perfectly cool and fearless.

Looking steadfastly, he could perceive that the moving creatures were miniature men and women, dressed in fantastic garb. They danced about to and fro, here and there, uttering few sounds and seeming wholly unconscious of the presence of an observer. Mr. Skinner knew that they were elves; they belonged to the story of Tannhäuser.

An hour ago he did not believe in the existence of such beings. Would anybody believe him when he should relate his experiences? What would the solid, practical common-sense of Squan respond to a story of an actual experience with elves? He had an instinctive feeling that it would never do to include anything of that kind in his next letter to the *Barnegat Advertiser*.

Mr. Skinner sat perfectly still, and watched the pretty creatures making their evolutions. He had half a notion at one time to put out his hand suddenly, and seize a couple of them. There was a fortune waiting for the showman who should offer such an attraction to the people. Tom Thumb and his kind would be nowhere compared with such atoms as these. But he thought better of it. They seemed so innocent and happy that he could not bear to injure one of them. And for money too! He had enough of that without doing a cowardly action for the sake of it.

They came nearer and nearer to him, and he could see that they were numbered by tens of thousands. Every blade of grass and every barley-corn of earth swarmed with them. They danced, and rolled, and kicked, and leaped, and tumbled; and as they came to his side and turned somersaults upon the ferule of

his umbrella, some of them began to throw their caps into the air. One cap finally fell upon his hand. He did not mean to do it, but, somehow, involuntarily, his fingers closed upon it. In the twinkling of an eye the whole army of elves vanished, the glow faded from the grass, and there was silence and deep darkness.

"Queer!" muttered Mr. Skinner to himself; "all gone, every imp of them. Let's see what it is I've got, anyhow."

He struck a match and looked. It was a tiny cap, too small to go upon the end of his finger.

"Well, there's something like proof if I ever want to tell what I saw! I'll keep it."

He never knew precisely whence came the impulse that moved him to do so absurd a thing as to remove his hat and to place that little thimble of a cap upon his head; but he did so, and no sooner had it touched his crown than there was heard a sound of rushing wind and a confused murmur of voices. He felt himself whirled about by some unseen force, and before he could make a movement of resistance, he found himself lying in what appeared to be a dimly-lighted cavern, flat upon his back, with his umbrella in one hand and his hat in the other.

## II.

"Not very pleasant," said Mr. Skinner, as he sat up and looked around; "but it's original and mighty interesting! I'd pay a reasonable price to know what it was that picked me up and flung me in here. I didn't see a thing. I'm in for it now, though, sure as you're born."

Mr. Skinner got upon his feet, and after feeling his revolver, to ascertain if it was handy for use, he examined the cavern. It had rocky walls, absolutely bare, unless where stalactites here and there hung from the roof. Straight before him it opened through a narrow way into a space beyond, of which he could see little, excepting that far, far in the distance he discerned what appeared to be a mere point of very brilliant light.

Hardly had he gotten upright than the walls of the cavern rang suddenly with a chorus of wild, shrieking laughter.

Slightly startled by this fiendish noise, he looked and saw coming toward him swiftly what looked something like a squall of snow. Before he could think about it, he was enveloped by a crowd of figures of misty whiteness, which swept round and about him with amazing velocity.

It was a moment or two before he could realize precisely what was the matter; but he soon began to mark the outlines of hideous forms, which grinned at him in a horrible fashion and seemed to menace him.

"Ghosts! or my name is not Skinner! Well, I never thought I'd strike anything like this!"

The whirlwind of shadows encircled him with accelerated speed, and as they came closer and closer to him, the demoniacal yells became more fierce and terrible. Mr. Skinner was surprised at his own calmness. Leaning upon his umbrella, he observed the performance with rather a critical air, and after a brief interval of silence he remarked, without being certain that he was addressing anyone in particular:

"It's of no use. You can't scare me with any of your whooping and howling. I can stand this sort of thing as long as you can. I'm not one of the hysterical kind."

Still the spectral storm raged wildly about him, and still the cavern echoed the voices that came out of the tempest.

"Oh well!" said Mr. Skinner, at last, sitting quietly down and crossing one leg over the other, "if it makes you feel better to waltz around that way, just go on! I can wait! Only I'm going to explore this den, if I have to stay here a week to do it!"

Suddenly, as he spoke, the ghostly crowd left him and flew shrieking down the passage whence it came. One figure alone stood before Mr. Skinner. It looked somewhat like an old man, with long hair and beard, and with a face of majestic sternness.

Mr. Skinner saw the form so vividly that he at first thought it to be a real human being; but when it stood between him and the passage-way, and he perceived that he could see the distant light through the old man's mantle, he comprehended that he had a genuine ghost to deal with.

"Unhappy man," said the spectre, "why did you dare to penetrate to this secret chamber?"

"Well, in the first place, I'm a free and independent American citizen, traveling upon a passport signed by the Secretary of State, and I've got a right to go where anybody else goes; and, in the second place, I was pitched in here, head over heels, without my consent, by some of your people."

"Are you not afraid to stand in the presence of the awful spirits of the dead?"

"No, I'm not! Certainly not! You can't frighten me? What are you, anyhow? You're nothing but a little bit of vapor, or carbonic-acid gas, or something. If there were a chimney here and a strong draught, you'd be sucked up the flue. You couldn't help yourself. Afraid! I'm not afraid of anything I can poke my umbrella through, like that, and that!" and Mr. Skinner stirred about with his umbrella in the middle of the spectre.

"You are very audacious; but you will never escape from here," said the ghost, solemnly; "never, never!"

"I won't? We'll see about that. I've left my directions with the United States consul, down at the town below here, and if I'm not back again within a specified time, he'll be up here and blow your old mountain to flinders! You don't seem to be acquainted with the party you have to deal with."

"It is strange," said the spectre, with the faintest suggestion of embarrassment in its hollow tones; "we are not used to being regarded with such calmness by mere mortals."

"I know it," answered Mr. Skinner; "I know it. People generally are frightened into fits when they think they see a ghost; but I made up my mind long ago that if I ever met one I was going to investigate him. S'pose we sit down here and have a little talk?"

The spectre did not move; but it struck Mr. Skinner that he detected upon the misty countenance some evidence that the ghost felt that it was hardly holding its own. Mr. Skinner had the advantage, and he knew it.

"I want to ask you now, for example," said Mr. Skinner, sitting and locking his fingers over his knee, "how it feels to be a disembodied spirit? Never hungry, are you?"

The ghost slowly shook his head.

"Costs you nothing for food; don't have to buy any clothes; no aches or pains, or anything of that kind?"

The spectre still nodded negatively.

"I thought not," said Mr. Skinner, "and nothing spent for traveling expenses either. I reckon, now, if you wanted to take a fly over to America you could get there in a jiffy: crawl through a keyhole when you felt like it too, I've no doubt?"

"Yes," said the ghost.

"It's mighty singular," said Mr. Skinner, reflectively. "I've felt that way myself at times, in dreams. It must be rather agreeable, upon the whole. No taxes and no work to do. But, say, what's the fact about you fellows haunting houses and graveyards? Ever do anything of that kind?"

"Sometimes."

"I wouldn't have believed it two hours ago. But what's the sense of it? What's the use of scaring people with that kind of foolishness? Why don't you keep off and behave?"

"You could not understand it if I were to tell you."

"I'd like to have a chance to try, any way. But, no matter, let that pass. I wish you'd tell me, though, what's going on in here. Whose place is it?"

"These are the realms of Venus. You shall see them; I will lead you."

"Will you! That's clever! I'm glad I met you!" and Mr. Skinner attempted to pat his companion on the back, but his hand went through the figure.

"How soon will you be ready to start?" asked Mr. Skinner.

"Now!"

"All right! But wait a minute! No objection to my smoking, I suppose?" said Mr. Skinner, lighting a match. "Maybe you'll have a cigar? Oh! excuse me; I forgot. Of course you don't care for such things? Now," said he, shouldering his umbrella, "if you'll push ahead I'll follow."

"I will go!" said the spectre.

"One moment! As we are going to travel together I think I ought to—that is, I,—beg pardon, but have you a name?"

"I am the Erl-king! One of the poets, Goethe, wrote of me. You have read it, perhaps."

"What! you don't say! Yes, sir, that poem is in every 'Speaker' in our school district. You ran off with a child. I tell you what, old man, it wouldn't do to try any of those kidnaping pranks in our country; the people wouldn't put up with them. Where is the little one?"

"In the court chamber. You shall see."

The journey began. The pair entered the narrow passage-way, and Mr. Skinner, whose powers of observation were in full play, noted that the walls were cut so smoothly that not a crevice or scratch could be seen upon them.

"That's a mighty nice piece of work," he said, rubbing his hand upon the wall. "How did you cut that? With hand tools or atmospheric drills?"

"It was not done by mortal hands!" said the shade.

"No?" exclaimed Mr. Skinner, as the pair proceeded upon their journey. "And this too!" he said, as they emerged into a long gallery higher and wider than the passage-way leading to it. "This beats any rock-cutting I have seen yet. I say, if anybody ever wanted to run a railroad tunnel through this mountain would your folks consider a proposition for a right of way?"

The ghost slowly shook his head.

"It's a pity, too," said Skinner, sadly, "for it don't seem right to have work like that wasted."

"It's not wasted," said the goblin.

"Well, of course, each of us looks at it differently. That's only natural. Now, it strikes me that to bore a magnificent hole through a mountain for nothing else than for a parcel of goblins to prowl about in, is a sinful waste of effort. However, it's none of my business."

As he spoke there was heard a faint sound of the crowing of a cock.

"Halloa! What's that? Sounds like a rooster!"

"It is a cock crowing outside of us, upon the hill-top."

"Outside, eh? I thought at first maybe you kept chickens, and it struck me as kind of singular. I couldn't imagine what a ghost wanted with poultry."

A few steps further on the pair came to the edge of a precipice, and Mr. Skinner could see, beneath, a black, rolling stream from which clouds of light vapor ascended; while upon the other side, perhaps a hundred feet distant, the rocks rose sheer and rugged to the level of the height upon which he stood.

Across the chasm was a sort of bridge, not wider than a hand's breadth, and having nothing but the naked footway to support the traveler who should try to cross it.

"What is this?" asked Mr. Skinner.

"This," said the spectre, "is a river of boiling pitch, which must be passed by every mortal who penetrates to these realms."

"How do visitors get across?"

"Upon this bridge. Some do not succeed. Dare you venture it?"

"I think I shall. Is it the custom to walk over?"

"It is," said the goblin, with what seemed to be a look of fiendish exultation upon its misty countenance.

"Humph!" remarked Mr. Skinner. "Nobody can account for the foolishness that there is in the world. Now, my way of getting over is different. Hold my umbrella a moment; won't you?"

As the goblin could not comply with this request, Mr. Skinner put the umbrella under the top of his satchel. Then he got down and sat astride of the bridge and aided by his hands he made a series of small jumps which brought him safely to the other side in a few moments.

The goblin was there to meet him, and Mr. Skinner noticed that it had an air of severe disappointment. When he got upon his feet he said:

"That is the poorest contrivance for crossing a stream that I ever saw. Why don't you fit up something better?"

"We are contented with it!" said the ghost, gloomily.

"I'll tell you," remarked Mr. Skinner, producing a pencil, and making a calculation upon the back of an old letter which he fished from his pocket. "I know a man in my country who'll run an iron truss bridge over that chasm for twenty-four hundred dollars, and keep it painted for ten years. Something substantial and safe. If you say so I'll write to him?"

The goblin, with a mournful look, shook his head.

"All right," said Mr. Skinner, "it's your concern and not mine. But, I'll tell you, if money was any object with you there are people who'd give a handsome bonus for the privilege of boring for oil right around here. I know, old man, from what I've seen in Pennsylvania, that there is petroleum where that pitch comes from. Do you care to speculate in the matter? No? Oh, very well, I thought it might be friendly to mention it."

As the shade of the Erl-king moved forward, with Mr. Skinner following, the character of the gallery underwent a change. The walls were separated by larger distances, and the vault above them rose to a greater height. The rocks, instead of showing their nakedness, began to display lavish adornment. Sometimes they were covered with masses of trailing vines which hung from them in graceful festoons; sometimes great bunches of beautiful ferns were clustered upon the walls, their long and feathery branches sweeping downward to the floor. At brief intervals the verdure gave place to a mosaic work of splendid

jewels. Mr. Skinner was amazed to find hundreds of square feet of the walls glistening with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, amethysts, and other precious stones of enormous size, and cut with the most exquisite skill.

The sun did not shine upon them, and there was no artificial light that he could discover; and yet the mass of jewels flooded the vast chamber with a radiance that dazzled his eyes. It was the most glorious vision that he had ever encountered. It surpassed in the richness of its coloring and the splendor of its wealth everything that he had ever read of in the Arabian Nights, or dreamed of as he pored over the wildest fairy tales. He trod upon a pavement encrusted with stones, each one of which would have enriched an empire, and he saw about and above him walls inlaid with such superb art as no jeweler of mortal clay could hope to rival.

His guide would have hurried on, but Mr. Skinner wanted to tarry a while and enjoy the spectacle. It is not every day, he thought, that a plain man has a chance to study such a scene. This alone, he said to himself, was worth all the trouble he had taken, and all the danger he had encountered. A description of the chamber, in a letter to the *Barnegat Advertiser*, would fill New Jersey with excitement; and, before the year was out, the Erl-king's goblin would have half a thousand Jerseymen knocking at his door and wanting to come in.

"Ah!" said Mr. Skinner to his guide, "I know now why you do not want visitors. I understand why you would like them to tumble off of that bridge.

You've got millions and millions of dollars invested there."

"This is nothing; they are baubles," said the ghost.

"What! Oh, well, of course they're not of much use to you. But I think I could get some practical good out of half a bushel, or so. That diamond there, for example, would supply half the women in my State with breast-pins, and make them perfectly happy. Are you handing any of these around—among your friends, I mean?"

The ghost made no sign of affirmation, and Mr. Skinner added, as he gave a final look at the display, "No matter. I don't covet them. Only, I thought it would be nice to take one or two along, to remember you by."

"You will not find it easy to forget me, in the place to which you are going," answered the Erl-king, with what might have passed for a sneer. "See!" and the spectre waved its shadowy hand.

Mr. Skinner turned and looked. Before him, at the foot of a gentle slope, lay a scene of weird and wonderful beauty. He saw a vast garden stretching away in front of him, and to the right and the left, towards boundaries which, somehow, were so indistinctly defined that he could not surely say what were the dimensions of the place, or its proportions. It had not the wildness of undisturbed Nature, but still less did it appear with the symmetry of human art. The beautiful confusion into which the untrained earth flings the forms that spring from her bosom, was not there. Some hand had prepared

the outlines of the garden, but upon a scheme such as no mortal man could have devised. There were grace and beauty, but these were evolved from an order which was elfish in its eccentricity, and which appeared even wilder than chance itself.

There were myriads of walks twisting and writhing into strangest shapes, beginning nowhere and leading no whither; and these ran in and out among fantastic groupings of shrubbery, which expressed no definite notions of forms, but conveyed suggestions of a purpose to fill the mind of the observer with a sense of the uncanny.

The trees were covered with foliage which had a greenness not precisely that of the outer world, but so differing from it that one could not tell precisely wherein the difference lay. The sward, of the same strange hue, was covered with flowers of novel and peculiar shapes, and glowing with colors that had no counterpart in nature. Here and there cataracts fell from eminences upon the plain, but the water, as it tumbled, was governed by some force which turned it into queer figures, so that one might imagine it to possess life and volition of its own.

After its descent, it ran away through tortuous channels among the grasses, bubbling, and leaping, and playing fantastic tricks, as no earthly water could have done. The fountains that burst upward from the plain at various points, also dashed and flashed in obedience to some law which was excepted from the code of nature.

A flood of strong and penetrating light poured over the whole garden; but there was no sunshine, no

distinct radiance of any kind. The shadows merged into the light imperceptibly, and the waters gave back but a faint reflection to the source of their illumination. The leaves danced and fluttered, and the surface of the streams was lightly ruffled, but there was no breeze; the birds flew about upon odd courses from bush to tree; and they seemed to sing; but no note of their music fell upon the ear. The cataracts tumbled in silence, no sound of the falling waters came from the fountains.

There was splendor and beauty, but over it all was the hush of death. It was a place that might have been made a home for joy, but it was joyless and horrible. There was life, movement, activity; but only such animation as that which stirs within the realms of dreamland—mysterious, noiseless and unreal.

As Mr. Skinner looked down upon the scene he realized these things, and, perhaps, for a moment, he had a sense of oppression, as though he were in a nightmare. But he readily freed himself from this feeling, and his curiosity was strongly excited as he noted several figures, apparently human beings, passing slowly to and fro, in attitudes of dejection, along the avenues of the garden.

"Who are those people?" he asked of his guide.

"Those are mortal men who have come here as you have come, and whose fate it is to linger here for ever."

"Why don't they quit and go home?"

"Only two of all who have entered this realm have gone away, and they returned when they were sum-

moned. That is the doom of all; to tarry or to return."

"Who were the two?"

"Tannhäuser and Thomas of Erceldoune."

"Are they down there now?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you don't mind, I'll get you to introduce me. I would like to know one of them."

They walked down the declivity and into the garden. Mr. Skinner examined everything carefully.

"Land like that," he said, pointing to a grassy tract which stretched away to the left, "would bring forty dollars an acre in West Jersey. I know a man who gave that price for some not quite so good."

The ghost made no reply.

"I don't see," continued Mr. Skinner, "that you do much with the property. Now, there's a field I know would be first-rate for watermelons and sweet potatoes; a light, sandy soil, but rich and easily ploughed. If I were you I'd put at least an acre in melons and another in tomatoes and lima beans; but then, of course," said Mr. Skinner, suddenly remembering the unsubstantial nature of his companion, "you don't care as much for such things as I do. It's a pity, though, so much territory going unimproved. It would be far better for those people there if they had a regular job of spading and hoeing to do every day."

They walked on as he spoke, and as they passed a tree that was filled with fruit Mr. Skinner plucked from the branches something that looked like an apple. When he bit it, he found that it was but a mass of dust.

"A decent cider apple-tree would be a blessing in such a place as this," he said.

"This," said the goblin, pausing near to one of the wanderers in the garden, "is Thomas of Erceldoune."

The man turned as his name was uttered, and Mr. Skinner went up, with some vivacity of manner, seized his hand and shook it.

"Glad to know you! I've met nobody since I came in here but my ghostly friend and some others like him, and it's a satisfaction to meet a genuine man."

"Alas!" said Thomas, sadly, "is still another victim added to those who have come here to find endless misery?"

"You don't take exactly the right view of it," said Mr. Skinner, cheerily, "I am not a victim. Not a bit of it."

Mr. Skinner felt a deep pity in his heart for this wretched man. He could not determine clearly whether Thomas of Erceldoune was young or old. He looked as if he might not have lived more than three decades, and yet there was something about him that suggested vigorous manhood which had been suddenly stopped in its development and kept for untold years precisely at the point at which it was when its forces were petrified. The air of sadness that he wore was the visible sign of despair. From this man's soul hope had flown for ever and for ever.

"How long have you been here?" asked Mr. Skinner.

"I do not know. Sometimes I think but a day;

at others I seem to have dwelt here for a thousand years. It was in the fifteenth century that I left my earthly home for the last time."

"You don't say? Why, that's nearly four hundred years!"

"Yes; it must be so long."

"How did you get here?"

"I came first to gratify my curiosity. Then I was permitted to go back to my home. But I knew that they would summon me; I knew it! And one day while I made merry at a feast with my friends, one came to tell me that a hart and a hind were coming up the highway to my door. No one but myself perceived that my time had come. But I was conscious of the meaning of the visit of those strange messengers, so I arose and followed them away, away, blinded by my tears and my misery, until they led me here."

"Do you know what I would have done if I had been you?" asked Mr. Skinner.

"No."

"Why, well, instead of quitting home I should have had venison for supper."

"That is a strange thing to hear in this place."

"I know, but I mean it! See here, old fellow, cheer up! You're mistaken if you think I am going to stay in here. Indeed I'm not. And if you will come along with me, and stick to me, I'll run you out when I go. I don't know exactly how, but I'll do it if I say so!"

"It cannot be!"

"Oh, come now, that is nonsense! If I get you off

you can go over the ocean with me. I'll settle you on a little place somewhere in Atlantic County, make you snug and comfortable, and you can start fresh in life. Is it a bargain?"

"Impossible!"

"I don't know that you care much for politics; but if you come with me to New Jersey, and you're in want of money, I could arrange, maybe, to have you run for something—the Legislature, or some other paying office, enough to make you easy. Let me see; are you an Irishman?"

"I am from Scotland."

"Scotch, hey? Well, that is unfortunate! You'd have a much better chance in my country if you were Irish. We Americans think we rule ourselves; but we don't. The Irish govern us! But I'll do the best I can for you, so get together your things and come along."

But Thomas of Erceldoune did not answer. He hung his head, and turning about slowly walked away.

"Won't come, eh?" said Skinner.

The retreating figure shook its head slowly and mournfully.

"Young man," called Mr. Skinner, "you may never have another chance like this. It's the wildest nonsense to reject it. You come along with me and we'll stir up this den of goblins so that they'll be glad to get rid of us at any price. I'll take you under the protection of the American flag, and we'll see whether anybody will dare to hold us! Won't go? Well, it's too bad! too bad!" and Mr. Skinner looked after the unhappy man, and watched him until he disappeared behind the shrubbery.

"No, he will not go," said the goblin. "He knows better than you do the awful power that holds you both in thrall."

"Not both, old gentleman. I see you are still deluding your cloudy noddle with the idea that I am going to stay."

"You will stay," answered the goblin, "and, as it did to Thomas of Erceldoune, so a hundred years will seem to you but a swiftly passing day."

"Ah, my venerable friend," replied Mr. Skinner, "you can't play that upon me. I have an American lever watch and a pocket calendar for the current year. There'll be no time rolling by without my knowing it."

"We shall see," answered the ghost, with an air of not feeling quite so certain about it as he had done before.

"And, meanwhile," said Mr. Skinner, "s'pose we push on and complete this exploration. I want to see the end of the journey."

## III.

The spirit of the Erl-king made no reply, but drifting slowly across the garden it entered the portal of what seemed to be a vast building of some kind, though so puzzling and uncertain were its outlines, and so indistinct the light that shone about the place, that Mr. Skinner could not by most careful scrutiny determine if it were really a structure, or a wall of the solid rock hewn into symmetrical shape.

He followed his guide through the doorway, along a wide hall which rang beneath his footsteps, and

thence through another wide portal into a long chamber of such height as he could not clearly discern. A table stretched from one end of the room to the other, and gathered about it was a great host of figures, whose grayish whiteness could be perceived without difficulty through the dusky atmosphere.

"This," said the goblin, "is the Hall of Heroes. Here are gathered the immortal parts of men whose deeds upon earth have made their fame eternal."

"Soldiers, I reckon," said Mr. Skinner. "Who are they?"

"There," replied the ghost, "sits Arthur, and about him are gathered the glorious Knights of the Round Table. All are there, the true and the false together. There is Charlemagne with his warriors, his crown upon his head, his good sword by his side. Near to him Red-Bearded Frederick sits with his six knights. Thrice his beard enwraps the stony table in front of him, and thrice more still must it enfold it."

"Why doesn't he shave?" asked Mr. Skinner calmly.

"Here," said the spectre, not deigning to reply, "the three great Tells join with the throng. The legend is that they sleep a mortal sleep within the mountain. But their eyes of sense will never more unclose. And with them are the shades of valiant men of all degrees, a company of the mighty and the heroic."

"What are they at?" asked Mr. Skinner.

"It is a festival. They sit here, shadows of their ancient selves, but with souls that feel the impulse of the former fires, to hold revel and to recount the deeds of the wondrous past."

"A kind of a dinner party," suggested Mr. Skinner. "I'd like to join them. I don't see anything to eat; but I s'pose I am safe to get a spectral steak or a goblin chop, and that's enough when a man is not hungry."

"Beware how you thrust yourself upon these awful shades!" said the Erl-king. "They will not brook levity or familiarity."

"I guess I will sit at the table and look on, anyhow." And Mr. Skinner, advancing, took a seat tolerably close to one of the ghosts, and, assuming an easy attitude, observed them.

There was a murmur of voices among them, but of voices such as no tongue ever shaped into words. And ever and anon the warriors, who seemed clad cap-à-pie in ghostly armor, moved as if to raise beakers to their lips, and to drain them to the dregs. Nobody appeared to notice Mr. Skinner's presence; but after a while that gentleman began to display signs of uneasiness, and, presently rising, clearing his throat, and looking calmly around, he said, as if he were addressing an ordinary meeting of mortals:

"Gentlemen, your chairman has not called upon me to respond to any sentiment, possibly because he's not familiar with the modern custom upon festive occasions, or perhaps because, not knowing me, he may have persuaded himself that I would feel some diffidence in addressing such a company. I do not wish to obtrude my opinions upon you; but since my entrance to these regions, I have acquired the conviction that it would be an act of philanthropy for an intelligent outsider like myself to make an

effort to freshen up your views a little. I intend, therefore, to offer a few remarks, which I trust will be received in the spirit of friendliness which moves me to present them.

"Of course, gentlemen, my notions of things must inevitably differ widely from yours. You were dead and buried hundreds of years ago, and your sympathies are largely with a past that was wholly ignorant of matters of high importance with which I am perfectly familiar; and I have the additional advantage of still possessing a physical body, and not being compelled to stay underground all day, and to go out only at night, and even then presenting the appearance of having been sliced out of a fog-bank."

Here the Erl-king cautioned Mr. Skinner not to go on. But he continued:

"Without going deeply into the work of contrasting the methods of your time with the methods of mine, I may be permitted to remark upon the oddity of the circumstance that while individual soldiers of your age encased themselves with iron stove-plates and helmets, the vaporous semblance of which you now wear, we have adapted such means of protection only to ships, with the result that the chief purpose of the existence of a portion of mankind just now is to make ships that no existing gun can penetrate, and when that is done, to invent a gun that can sink that ship.

"The point of interest is that men are still as busy killing each other as they were when you were around; and that while we are proud to pity the ignorance and folly which characterized you when you spent

your lives in fighting, we have not become so wise as to perceive that to settle a quarrel by shooting men with a revolving cannon is not any more sensible than to chop them up with axes and to brain them with clubs, as you folks used to do."

The Erl-king hinted to Mr. Skinner that he was touching a delicate subject; but the speaker proceeded:

"However, the matter to which I wished principally to allude interests you more directly. I say, frankly, that until I dropped in here, I never had any solid faith in the reality of ghosts. I regarded the whole thing as a mass of superstition. I see now that I was wrong. But having confessed this much, I think I ought to say to you, who probably have some influence over the affairs of your kind, that the sooner some one of you starts an energetic reform movement in the ghost business, the better will be the result. Gentlemen, I am a practical man—a utilitarian, if you will; and I must say that it grieves me, when I look around upon this grave and dignified company, to think of the ridiculous character of the methods in which you manifest yourselves to mankind. If I were a goblin, and I retained a particle of my self-respect, I would keep away from graveyards at night; I would refrain from haunting houses, and prowling about, making noises to scare timid women and children; I would refuse to come out at so-called spiritual *seances* and thrum diabolical music upon cracked guitars, and tilt tables at the bidding of long-haired and wild-eyed mediums. If a ghost who has been respectable in life cannot put in his

spare time in the outer world in better ways than these, my advice to him is to stay in the bowels of the earth right along, and to let honest people alone."

The Erl-king mentioned to Mr. Skinner that they must move on at once. But Mr. Skinner said that he would close in a moment.

"Apart from the silliness of such proceedings, gentlemen, they are disgustingly useless. Now, if I were a ghost I would use my powers to reveal to living men truths that would be of service to them —such as knowledge of the spiritual state, and information, perhaps, as to the location of veins of coal, of the metals, and so forth; or, if these things were forbidden, I would rent myself out for exhibition for the benefit of good objects of various kinds. A genuine ghost, for example, could always find employment when Hamlet or Macbeth is performed at the theaters; and if you can flit about with the rapidity commonly attributed to you, some of you might earn good wages carrying messages for persons to places which the telegraph does not reach."

The Erl-king said that there would be danger in speaking further; but Mr. Skinner added:

"One word more. You hold in wicked bondage down here in the garden a lot of people who have a right to their liberty. Now, what good it does you, or the head person who governs this place, to practice cruelty of that kind, I can't imagine. My opinion is that you ought to let them go, and to give them each a pocketful of the jewelry I saw back here a piece, for damages done to them. If you don't agree to this I intend as soon as I return to my hotel to get

out a writ of habeas corpus, if such a thing is to be had in the German Empire; and most likely, if there is any fuss made about it, I will organize a railroad to run along here, and I will have a locomotive whizzing through this mountain in a way that will make you wish you could die again! That is all I have to say. I am obliged to you for your attention; and if any of you ever want to communicate with me don't hunt up a medium, but come direct to me at Squan, New Jersey, in the day-time, and if the light annoys you we'll have a comfortable talk in the cellar or the smoke-house."

While Mr. Skinner was speaking the assembly sat in profound silence, and upon some of the faces could be detected a look of bewildered amazement. When he finished, he said politely:

"Good morning," and turned to go.

"How do you think it struck them?" asked Mr. Skinner of his companion.

"You are a marvelous man, and a bold one," replied the spectre, almost timidly. "I thought they would rend you in pieces. Strange! Strange! that such things should happen within these realms."

"I told you I'd give you some new ideas," said Mr. Skinner; "and now, which way are we going?"

"Straight forward."

"And what then?"

"Soon you will be ushered into the splendid court of Aphrodite, the mistress of these realms, and the power whom you and I and all must obey."

"A ghost, is she?"

"A being of transcendent and wondrous loveliness."

"Well, let me know before I get there, for I should like to fix myself up a little."

They pressed onward through a succession of apartments, each of which was more magnificent than that which preceded it, until they entered a chamber that was adorned with strange but beautiful objects.

"That," said the guide, "is a plant which gives to him who possesses it the power to ward off evil spirits. He who looks in this mirror sees all his future life in full detail depicted before him. The water of yonder bubbling fountain compels complete forgetfulness of the past. He who eats of the fruit that lies upon this table gains such vision that he can see the riches that are hidden in the bosom of the earth. Here are gathered all the resources of magic, and all the marvels that men have dreamed of when they have thought to pierce the veil that shuts out the supernatural from the natural."

"When you get tired of making an inventory of the effects," said Mr. Skinner, "perhaps you will come along."

"We are now," said the goblin, reverently, "upon the threshold of the throne-room of the glorious Aphrodite. Through that doorway we shall be ushered into her majestic presence."

"Wait a minute, then." And Mr. Skinner, unslinging his satchel, placed it upon the table, among the fruit that improved the eyesight, and began rummaging in its depths. A moment later he took

out a clean collar and a hair-brush. Placing himself before the mirror of life-to-come, he untied his cravat, removed his shirt-collar, put it carefully in his satchel, buttoned on the fresh one, tied his cravat, gave it two or three pats with his fingers, and then surveyed it with a look of satisfaction. Then taking off his hat, he smoothed his hair with the brush. When the operation was completed he returned the brush to the satchel, snapped the catch, resumed his hat, and, turning to the goblin, who observed him with what seemed feelings of horror, he said, "Now I am ready. Shall we go right in?"

The shade of the Erl-king approached the door, which swung slowly and silently upon its hinges. Mr. Skinner followed the goblin through the portal.

The scene upon which he was ushered transcended in dazzling splendor anything that he had ever witnessed. He saw a vast temple, whose walls were massive slabs of gold and pearl, covered by some cunning hand with grotesque but beautiful designs of elaborate workmanship. Huge pillars of sapphire and emerald rose from the floor and swept upwards to a roof of snowy crystal, through which a clear, soft radiance poured in a flood which made every nook and corner of the apartment as bright as though the noonday sun looked in upon it.

The floor was of onyx, laid in a wondrous pattern, such as no human mind has ever devised. The doors were made of ebony, inlaid with silver; and, at intervals, there stood tables of carved ivory, of amethyst, of frosted gold, and chairs of porphyry, and chrysolite, and sardius. Great mirrors of burnished silver hung

from the walls, and before them tiny fountains leaped into the air and fell into jeweled basins. Upon all sides there were riches, beauty, magnificence, and exquisite art, such as no treasure-house upon earth ever presented to the eye of man.

At the end of the room, beneath a canopy bespangled with gems, two golden thrones were placed, and sitting upon one of these the visitor saw a woman, so fair, so noble, so crowned with a matchless and wonderful beauty, that he thought all the loveliness of woman that he had ever looked upon was but as deformity in comparison with it. She was clad in a snowy robe of gossamer fineness and of most delicate grace; and upon her forehead glistened a diadem of jewels of surpassing splendor. About her, as she sat, were gathered a court of other women, scarcely less beautiful, and, as the visitor approached them, he heard strains of music of piercing sweetness, which swelled and throbbed through the crystal arches with vibrations which the ear might have heard for ever and for ever without satiety.

As the visitor came nearer, it seemed to him that that glorious company had been expecting him, for, when the Erl-king said to him, "This is Aphrodite, the Queen," she upon the throne smiled graciously upon him and gave him hearty welcome to her court, while those who surrounded her echoed her words, and appeared eager to do him honor.

"All very well," said Mr. Skinner, to himself; "but how about Tannhäuser, and Thomas of Erceldoune, and the other poor wretches in the garden? I have no doubt that they were received in the same manner."

"We have waited for you," said the Queen, most graciously, "and we rejoice that you have come to dwell with us. Happy is the mortal who is permitted to linger in the company of the immortals!" And she extended to him her white hand, that he might kiss it.

Mr. Skinner grasped it, shook it warmly, and said:

"Thank you, madame; you are very kind. I was traveling through the neighborhood, outside here, and I thought I'd just drop in. But I can't stay. Sorry; but I have an engagement in Berlin on the twenty-second."

"When you have tasted the delights of this realm you will not wish to go. The world from which you come has nothing to offer that can rival the fascinations of this."

"Well, madame, tastes differ, you know. This is gorgeous, and elegant, and all that; but, as a steady thing, I really think I should prefer Squan."

"Sit here," said the Queen, pointing to the throne by her side. "It is the place of honor—it is yours. The greatest men of your race have longed to occupy it; some have done so, and counted it the highest pleasure."

"It's handsome, that's certain," replied Skinner, running his hand over the golden carvings. "Handsome, but I must say that I've seen furniture that would beat it for comfort. Now I wonder that, instead of sitting about on a hard yellow affair like this, you don't order a few stuffed chairs, for common use? There's a cabinet-maker, near where I live,

that would get you up a dozen with springs for almost nothing, and be glad of the chance."

"You," said the Queen, laughingly, "are the only guest who ever thought our temple less than faultless."

"Well, madame, I'm a prosy sort of a man, who always looks at the practical side of things. Now, do you know what I would do if I owned this place?"

"I cannot tell."

"Why, I would rig up some kind of a stove, and keep a coal fire going, to take off the chill. It must be dreadfully damp, underground here."

The Queen and her maids of honor laughed merrily at this, and Mr. Skinner thereupon added:

"The best thing that I find here is a little good-humor. My friend, the Erl-king, here is much too solemn to be an agreeable companion. A week with him would make me melancholy for life."

"You shall always be merry here," replied the Queen, with a sweet smile. "These are the realms of joy, and I will give you a better companion than your guide. Which of these will you choose to be your partner through all the years to come?" And she waved her hand toward the throng which stood beside her.

"None of them, madame!"

"What! None?"

"Excuse me, madame, but I don't think you comprehend the existing state of things. I am a married man already. In my home, far across the sea, I have a wife whom I love. She is not so handsome as these, maybe, but her homeliness is not actually

alarming; and when it comes to housekeeping and plain cooking, she has no equal from the Hudson River to the Capes, if I do say it myself. While she lives I intend to stick to her."

Mr. Skinner was gratified to perceive that his remarks, uttered with some warmth, did not give offence. A ripple of laughter swept over the crowd.

"You have not much love for the beautiful, I think," said the Queen.

"Oh, yes, madame. When it comes to good looks, this place takes the palm, without a doubt. I was aware of that. I have often seen statues of you, out in the world. A little scarce of clothes, if you will pardon me for saying so, but uncommonly handsome; everybody admits that."

"Men praise me, do they?" asked Aphrodite.

"Oh, yes! Of course. In the matter of personal appearance, I mean. My guide-book, which I was reading over at the hotel, throws out an insinuation that there is a little too much paganism down here for Europe in the nineteenth century; but in the country that I come from we don't meddle with people's religious opinions."

The Queen made no response.

"I do think, though," continued Mr. Skinner, passing one leg thoughtlessly over the arm of the throne and speaking reflectively, "that it might not be a bad idea to organize a missionary movement in these parts. There's Elder Cooper of the Barnegat Meeting; he has a powerful gift as a persuader, and if you'd allow him to get up a revival-meeting in here somewhere, there is no telling what might happen."

"We will not speak of that!" replied the Queen in a tone of light displeasure.

"Beg pardon if I was rude. The thought occurred to me, and I expressed it frankly without meaning to hurt anybody's feelings."

As he spoke he was surprised to see a great throng of children come running into the apartment. They gathered close about him and gazed at him with childish wonder. Mr. Skinner looked into their faces, and while it was clear that they really were children, it seemed to him that there was something about them which told of more years than their stature counted. They had all the signs of youth, and yet he could not rid himself of an impression that their youth had left them long centuries ago.

As they ranged themselves before him, he said to the Queen:

"Yours, madame?"

"Oh, no! these are the little ones who left their homes in Hameln to follow the music of the Pied Piper."

"Seems to me I have heard something about it," observed Mr. Skinner; "how long ago was it?"

"Six centuries have passed since they came trooping into the mountain behind the Piper. One hundred and thirty of them came, and they are all here!"

"Well, well!" replied Mr. Skinner, "it's mighty queer, and sad too. How do you treat them?"

"We love them."

"Do you educate them? No academies down here, I 'spose? Never let them go to Sunday-school? Would you mind then if I asked a few questions?"

"You shall do so."

Mr. Skinner stood up.

"Put your hands behind your backs, children; that's it; now hold up your heads and look straight at me. What is the capital of Indiana? Speak right out! Nobody knows? How is Ireland bounded? Come, answer! Don't know? Well, I declare! How many are four and eight?"

The children stood silent, and eyed Mr. Skinner almost mournfully.

"Well, now," he proceeded to say, "let me try you in spelling. Can you spell 'Baker' for me? Begin 'B—!' Go on! B-a- b-a-. Somebody try it! Can't do it? I was afraid not. Can you spell 'Boy'? Begins with a B, like the other! Don't know that either!"

The Queen said that they knew nothing of earthly things.

"Well, madame, permit me to say that it's a blamed shame the way the education of these children has been neglected. You want a schoolmistress down here worse than you want a parson. That's my opinion, and I don't care who knows it."

Mr. Skinner found himself getting angry and warm. Opening his satchel, he took out a package and said:

"Children, here's some candy for you. Hardly enough to go around, but it's all I have, and there is no confectionery store handy. I'd give you some money to buy fire-crackers, too, only I know you'd never have a chance to spend it!"

"You love little children, I perceive," said Aphrodite.

"I do. I love them too well to like to see them poked underground alive, and kept there six or seven hundred years. It is a great wrong."

"They are very happy here."

"Well, maybe they are; but it's not the fair thing. I'll tell you what I'll do. You turn the whole batch over to me, and I'll take them along, and either bind them out or stow them away in an orphan asylum, where they will be decently brought up. Is it a bargain?"

"We cannot part with them."

"Who takes care of them? Who washes and dresses them, and fixes them up? You have no servants? No? I hardly thought you could persuade nursery maids to live underground here. That is the only advantage you have that I can see."

"What?"

"No bother with the servant-girl question. It pesters the life out of women up above. The hired girl we had just before I left home," said Mr. Skinner, with an absent look upon his face, as if his mind were contemplating some curious experience of the past, "parted with us because we complained of her frying the oysters in Mrs. Skinner's pomatum."

Aphrodite did not seem especially interested in this fragment of domestic history, and she motioned for the children to go. As Mr. Skinner watched them moving away, he said, putting his hand in the satchel:

"I just happened to think that I had a bottle of cough medicine along with me, that might be useful to the little ones. You are welcome to it if you want it."

Her Majesty apparently did not hear him, for she gave a signal, and again the hall was filled with the rapturous music that he had heard a brief while before. Instantly the floor was filled with beautiful dancers, who whirled about in riotous fury through a dance, which became wilder and wilder as it proceeded. Mr. Skinner observed the performance in silence.

"Is it not beautiful?" asked the Queen.

"Beautiful," replied Mr. Skinner; "but a little too violent for my taste."

"Shall you not join them?"

"I am obliged to you; but it is with the utmost difficulty that I manage to hobble through a plain cotillion. Round dances I'm opposed to. If I should step in there I should be so giddy in a minute that I could not stand. Your music is fine though. Who attends to that for you?"

"The Pied Piper; his real name is Orpheus."

"Ah! I'm not a very good judge, although I know the best from the worst. I am a subscriber to the Barnegat Brass Band, down where I live, and that organization took the first prize at a brass band tournament at Newark last summer. Some think it is superior; but I don't know. I have always had my doubts about it."

"Music is ever beautiful," said the Queen.

"Well, possibly, your experiences have been more favorable than mine. Sometimes when the band comes out serenading at night I incline to think that the art is overrated. Do you sing?"

"No; I listen to the others."

"I'm not much of a singer myself," said Mr. Skin-

ner, prodding an emerald tile in the pavement, absently, with the ferule of his umbrella; "but when I am at home I do sometimes turn a tune in the privacy of my family."

"Will you sing for me? Oh, I know you will!" exclaimed the Queen.

Mr. Skinner had a feeling of diffidence for the first time since he had entered the mountain.

"Well, madame, I should like to oblige you, but, to tell the truth, I—my voice is so poor that——"

"You will not refuse me?"

"But I am such a poor singer, that I know you will not be pleased," and Mr. Skinner laughed a nervous little laugh.

"I am sure you will try, will you not?" said Aphrodite.

"Well, if you insist on it, I s'pose I must," replied Mr. Skinner. "Let me see," said he, rubbing his chin and looking thoughtfully up at the ceiling; "I only know one piece, and not much of that. How does it begin?" and Mr. Skinner cleared his throat vehemently, twice. Meanwhile the entire company of dancers, and all the lovely maids of honor had gathered in front of him awaiting with interest the performance. Mr. Skinner felt himself getting uncomfortably warm. He cleared his throat again, and said:

"I'll do the best I can; it begins in this way: 'On Jor—dan's stor—my—y ba—a—nks I stand, And cast—' Wait a minute. I have not got the right pitch. That's too high. Let me try again: 'On Jor—dan's stor—my—y ba—a—nks I stand, And

cast a—' That won't do; it's too low. Once more: 'On Jor—dan's stor—my—y ba—a—nks I—I stand, And cast a—a wistful eye, To Ca—a—nyan's fair and ha—a—ppy land. Where my—y possessions li—i—ie.'"

As Mr. Skinner stopped he observed that everybody looked very solemn, and he thought the room somehow had lost some of the brilliant light that had filled it. He was conscious that he had not made a very favorable impression as a vocalist, and in a kind of desperation he yielded to an impulse to try again.

"I think probably I can do a little better if you will bear with me: 'On Jor—dan's stor—my—v ba—a—nks I——"

Before he could complete the line, a sudden pall of darkness fell upon the splendid scene before him; he felt a mighty rush of wind upon his face, and then he was whirled around and around with the greatest violence. He seemed for an instant to lose consciousness, and when he opened his eyes they looked straight upward at the serene beauty of the blue sky.

He found that he was lying flat upon his back upon the plateau to which he had come yesterday evening. Beside him lay his umbrella and his satchel. Above him the sun was shining brightly, about him the cool breeze rustled the leaves upon the trees, while the music of the birds was wafted to him from the neighboring forest. He thought that the fair earth and the sunshine and all the things that Nature presented to the eye had never seemed so beautiful.

How did he get here? That was almost the first question that thrust itself upon his bewildered mind.

Was it the sacred nature of the words that he had tried to sing that had offended his audience, or was it the atrocious character of his vocalization. He could not tell. He felt that he would give a moderate sum of money to ascertain.

He looked out over the edge of the plateau, and there beneath him was the town. He could see the people moving about in the streets, and there was a crowd in front of his hotel. Perhaps they were discussing his adventure and wondering what his fate could be. What should he tell them? The more he thought about it, the less certain did he feel of the reality of the strange and weird scenes through which he had passed. The impression of their actuality was strong upon his mind, but could he say absolutely and positively that he had not dreamed it all? He had a decided impulse to scoff at the idea. The Erlking, the ghosts, and the children, the man to whom he talked in the garden, surely he had encountered them and talked with them! But did not his common sense revolt at the theory that he had been tumbled into the cavern and tumbled out again without knowing how or by whose hands!

His perplexity increased as he reflected upon the matter. Then, suddenly, he thought of the talk he had heard about one hundred years in the mountain passing as swiftly as a single night; was it possible that this had happened to him? He looked at his watch. It marked six o'clock. That proved nothing. The scenery about him and particularly the town looked the same as they had done when he saw them last. He determined to go down to the hotel and satisfy his mind.

When he reached the hotel he assured himself that only one night had passed. Upon reflection Mr. Skinner resolved not to speak of the matter to any of the other people about the view, but to keep his own counsel; and to this day he cannot positively say whether he followed Tannhäuser into the mountain or merely had a tremendous nightmare upon the outside of that eminence.

# XI

## "JINNIE"

### A STORY OF A CHILD

"JINNIE! Vir-r-rginia-a-a! You 'Jin'! If you're not here in a minute, I'll whip you within an inch of your life!"

It was the shrill voice of Mrs. Tyke. Down from some mysterious part of the recesses of the house it came with the force and precision of a rifle-ball, through the narrow hall and open door to the ears of Jinnie, who was scrubbing the front steps.

Why Mrs. Tyke desired that the steps and the pavement should be scrubbed upon that cold and dismal December morning cannot be imagined. Probably she herself could not have given a reason for it if she had been asked. The bricks looked very clean and wholesome before the work began, and the marble steps were almost painfully white. Now, the pavement was covered with a film of ice upon which pedestrians slipped and were provoked to anger, and the steps were positively so icy as to be unfit for use.

The voice of Mrs. Tyke gave fresh impetus to the arm of the child, who was just giving a few finishing wipes to the uppermost step. She was a little child, surely not more than eight years of age. As she knelt upon the marble, rather painful prominence

was given to a pair of shoes which might once have been the property of Mrs. Tyke herself, but which were now worn, as forlorn and riddled wrecks, upon feet which were stockingless. The thin little legs above the leather ruins were blue with cold, and the tiny arms which wielded the wiping-cloth with accelerated speed were bare and chapped to redness.

If it was an offence to cover a pavement with ice upon such a morning, it was a bitter wrong to compel a little child so poorly clad to perform the work.

Before Jinnie had replaced her cloth in her bucket, Mrs. Tyke appeared in the doorway with anger in her face. She took hold of one of the child's ears with her coarse fingers and pulled her into the hall-way head foremost with as much force as if she had been shot out of a catapult. Then Mrs. Tyke, with a vigorous hand, boxed the ear that she had pulled, cuffed the other ear, impartially, knocking the child against the wall.

"I'll teach you to mind me when I call you! Pottering and fooling with your work! Now you go right out into the yard and scrub those bricks in a jiffy, or you'll know how the broom-handle feels."

Mrs. Tyke was going to have the back-yard scrubbed also. Why Mrs. Tyke did not scrub the four walls of the house, and the roof, and the chimney flues and the fence, and why she did not scrub the cobble-stones in the street, is an impenetrable secret.

Jinnie picked up the bucket, and went staggering through the hall, into the kitchen, with a feeling that her head might at any moment tumble off, as a

result of Mrs. Tyke's blows, and roll upon the floor. She refilled her bucket at the hydrant, and began her work with a vigor that promised to make Mrs. Tyke's back-yard within a few moments a fit place for skaters.

Just before the work was done, Mrs. Tyke appeared at the window with her bonnet on, and in a severe tone gave Jinnie some directions respecting the preparation of dinner during her absence. Then Mrs. Tyke withdrew, and just as the front door slammed Jinnie saw the head of a child appear over the top of the partition fence, between the yards of Mrs. Tyke and Mrs. Brown.

Young Miss Brown watched Jinnie putting away the scrubbing implements, and when Jinnie drew near to the fence with an apparent purpose to have some conversation, the little Brown said:

"It'll pretty soon be Christmas, now."

"Will it?" said Jinnie, without manifesting any trace of interest in the fact.

"Yes, and Kris Kringle is coming to our house. Mamma said so. Does Kris Kringle come to your house on Christmas?"

"Nobody ever comes to our house but the milkman. He is not Kris Kringle, is he?"

"Oh, no! Don't you hang up your stockings on Christmas eve?"

"I have no stockings to hang up."

"Where does Kris Kringle put all your pretty things, then?"

"He don't bring me any. Who is Kris Kringle?"

"Why, don't you know? He comes in a sleigh full of toys, pulled by reindeer, and——"

"Where does he come from? Ohio?"

"I guess so. But he comes down the chimbley every night before Christmas, and——"

"I expect our chimbley must be too little. Or maybe he don't know we live here."

"Oh, he knows where everybody lives; all the little children."

"I'm *so* sorry he forgets me! Maybe it's because I have no stockings! Oh, I wish, I wish I had!"

"Won't Mrs. Tyke lend you one of hers?"

"I'm afraid to ask her. I wonder would Kris Kringle come if I put a bucket there for him?"

"I never heard of his giving toys in a bucket. If he gave you a large doll maybe he would. Have you got a large doll?"

"I never had any doll. I made one once out of a dust brush and some rags, but Mrs. Tyke whipped me and took it away. If I had a real doll I'd be so happy that I couldn't stand it."

"If Mrs. Tyke whipped you for it that would keep you from being too happy, wouldn't it?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you ask your mamma to write to Kris Kringle to come?"

"I never had a mamma; and no father, either. I was born in an asylum, and Mrs. Tyke always says it's a pity I was ever."

"Maybe he'd come if you'd pray to get him."

"I only know 'Now I lay me.' I learned it at the asylum; but I daren't say it out loud any more."

"I don't know what we can do about it, then."

Jinnie began to cry; but suddenly remembering

the imminent probability of Mrs. Tyke's return, she wiped her eyes with a rag of her dress, and said:

"Good-bye, I must go in now. I have to get dinner."

So she ran into the kitchen, and the head of the youthful Brown slowly descended until it was eclipsed by the fence.

Jinnie went to work to prepare the vegetables for dinner, with her poor little brain in such a stir of excitement about Kris Kringle and the possibility of his remembering her or forgetting her, that she could hardly keep her mind upon the task that her hands were doing; but she was recalled from her dreams by the sound of Mrs. Tyke's step in the hall; and as Mrs. Tyke perceived that she had not been very industrious, Mrs. Tyke promptly boxed her ears. She fell to the floor, and then Mrs. Tyke kicked her two or three times. This energetic treatment effectively dispelled all of Jinnie's visions of Kris Kringle. She had rarely had any information upon which to build pleasant thoughts of what life might have been to her; and now when her mind was taking its first flight into those realms of imagination wherein so many of the forlorn of earth find at least a taste of happiness, the red and vigorous hand of Mrs. Tyke hurled her back once more into the dreary and dreadful reality of life.

For the rest of the day Jinnie hurried through her myriad duties with a tremulous fear upon her that if she should dare even to think of that mysterious being who loved the little children she might invoke still further blows. The blows came at any rate,

more than once, despite her carefulness; but that was always a part of her experience, and she bore them perhaps a little better now because she was looking forward with a faint suggestion of happiness to the night, when she should lie beneath the scant covering of her bed, and think without fear of harm of the reindeer and sleigh and the toys of the kind old man, who might perhaps not forget her this time.

When supper-time came Mrs. Tyke ordered her to go to the baker's for bread. The shop to which she had been accustomed to go was closed, for some reason, and Jinnie sought another, upon another street. On her way home through the dusky thoroughfare she came suddenly upon a show-window brilliantly lighted, and filled with childish splendors belonging to the Christmas season.

She had never seen so many beautiful things before. There were toys of all kinds, some of which she understood and some of which were all the more fascinating for the mystery that surrounded them. There were wagons and horses, and miniature tea-sets, and pop-guns, and baby houses, and jumping-jacks, and railroad cars, and tin steamboats, and make-believe soldier caps; and these were mingled with clusters of glass balls of various colors, which glittered in the gaslight in a most wonderful manner. But the glory of the window was a huge waxen doll dressed as a bride, in pure white, with a veil and a wreath and the loveliest satin dress. She had real golden hair and the softest blue eyes, that stared and stared as though they were looking into some other surprising show-window over the way.

Jinnie trembled when she saw this marvelous doll. She had no idea that anybody ever wore such wonderful clothing as that. She had never dreamed that anything could be so beautiful. She thought she would be perfectly happy if she could stand there and gaze at it during the remainder of her life. Oh, if Kris Kringle would come and leave her such a doll as that! No, that could not be; it was impossible that she should ever have such a joyful experience. But maybe he might bring her a doll like some of the smaller and less splendid ones which surrounded the bride in swarms. Yes, she would be satisfied with the very poorest one of them. She would hide it somewhere, under her bed covering, perhaps, where Mrs. Tyke could not see it, but where she could find it and kiss it and hug it and take it close in her arms when she went to sleep at night.

The thought of Mrs. Tyke came to her like a blow in the midst of her delight. She remembered that she must hurry homeward, and so taking a last, long look she turned and ran along the pavement, her heart filled with a wild, passionate longing that Kris Kringle would come to her and bring her something she could love.

Of course Mrs. Tyke greeted her with angry words and two or three savage thumps. She expected that. But Mrs. Tyke was not content with this. When she sat down to supper she told Jinnie that as she had been unusually idle and bad that day she should go hungry to bed. Then Mrs. Tyke ate a particularly hearty meal, with the child watching her; and when she had finished she sat by, growling and

threatening, while Jinnie cleared away the tea-things preparatory to being marched off to bed.

Jinnie missed her supper sadly, but she did not mind the hunger so much on that night, for her mind was busy with new delights.

It was dark in her room, but she knew where the chimney was; and before she undressed she went over and felt it. There was a hole there for a stove-pipe. but it had paper pasted over it.

"Perhaps," said Jinnie, "Kris Kringle did not come because the hole was shut."

He would not come down the chimney and out into the dining-room, she knew, because he would have to go through the stove; and that would burn him, and his toys, too, perhaps. She thought it might be an inducement for him to come if she should punch a hole through the paper. She was afraid to tear it off, afraid of Mrs. Tyke's vengeance; so she pushed her finger through it. Then she undressed, and went hopefully to her bed upon the floor.

But not to sleep; she was too greatly excited. She began to wonder why it was that life was so terrible. She never imagined that her life differed from those of other children. It is the peculiar infamy of brutality to a child that the victim does not know how to sound the cry for the help that is almost always near to it. It accepts its lot as a thing of course; it does not know that there are perhaps within a few short steps of its house of suffering hearts that would stir with wrath for its wrongs, and that there is within reach a law which would bring retribution upon the head of its oppressor.

Jinnie believed that all childhood was a time of punishment and misery. She saw other children playing in the street who seemed merry and joyous, and she could not understand why they were so. She remembered the Brown girl, also, and how she had heard her sometimes laughing and singing. Jinnie could not laugh and sing in her house with Mrs. Tyke near her. She thought the other children might be happy because they had dolls, and because they could have their stockings filled at Christmas time. She knew that grown-up people were not abused as she was, but it seemed such a long, long time to wait until she was grown up. She felt that when she was she would be kinder to children, and not strike them with the poker, at any rate, as Mrs. Tyke sometimes struck her.

And if Kris Kringle should come down into her room through the hole in the paper, she thought she would like to be awake and to ask him to take her away with him in his sleigh somewhere. As she dwelt upon this she pictured herself going up the chimney and then flying over the roofs behind the reindeer, and looking back at Mrs. Tyke standing at the window and cursing her. And so she fell asleep and into a tangled maze of dreams, wherein Kris Kringle, Mrs. Tyke and the doll-baby bride were mingled in great confusion.

Jinnie's first thought in the morning was the last that she had upon the night before. But as she hurriedly dressed herself it flashed across her mind that as there was grave peril that Kris Kringle might not come to her, perhaps it would make matters surer if she should go to him.

The milkman, whose cry she expected every moment, to her seemed a likely person to know where Kris lived, and to take her there. Young Miss Brown had rather indicated that Kris' home was in Ohio; but whether Ohio was a little piece up the street or millions of miles away, or whether it was a house or a stable or a town, she did not know. The milkman had spoken pleasantly to her sometimes, and he had a wagon. It was not as attractive as a sleigh with reindeer, but she had often longed to ride in it. She determined to speak to him. But when he came and she opened the door with a beating heart, he snatched the pitcher from her hand and frowned while he filled it. He was thinking of some offensive suggestions made by Mrs. Tyke upon the preceding evening in reference to his too intense partiality for water; and he seemed so cross that Jinnie was afraid to speak to him.

She came into the house again sorrowfully, but with a strong purpose to seek some other means of reaching Kris Kringle; and she carried this determination with her stubbornly through all the fatigues and hardships of the day.

About four o'clock in the afternoon Mrs. Tyke went out. Jinnie felt that her time had come. She resolved to make an effort to find Kris Kringle, to tell him of her longing desire, and to return home again before Mrs. Tyke got back. She put her woollen hood upon her head, wrapped around her shoulders the thin and faded rag which Mrs. Tyke dignified with the name of a shawl; and then she concluded to take a newspaper with her, so that if Kris Kringle

showed any disposition to urge the doll-baby upon her in advance of Christmas, she could have something to wrap it in.

When she came out of the house she crossed the street so that she could notice particularly whether there was anything in the construction of the roof of Mrs. Tyke's dwelling which would be likely to discourage Kris Kringle from attempting to reach the chimney. She saw that the roof was much lower than the roofs of the houses upon each side of it, and that it sloped at a sharp angle toward the front, while they were flat. The chimney, also, was certainly smaller than others in the vicinity, and the conclusion reached by the child's mind was that Kris Kringle had probably been indisposed to take the risks of running his sleigh upon so precipitous a roof for the sake of descending such a very narrow chimney.

This gave a fresh impulse to the child's purpose to visit Kris Kringle, so that she might plead with him to make a call at Mrs. Tyke's despite the inconveniences of the construction of the house. It occurred to her that she might possibly arrange for him to come to the front door and ring the bell, when she would come softly down stairs and open to receive him.

While she thought of the matter she walked quickly up the street, now somewhat gloomy in the early dusk, but before she had gone far she reflected that she ought to inquire the way to Ohio before the darkness should come. She paused to speak to two or three men who were hurrying by, but evidently they thought she intended to ask alms of them, and so

they would not pause to listen to her. She was discouraged; but at last she saw a boy standing by a street lamp, doing nothing, and she resolved to ask him.

He laughed rudely at her question and walked away. A moment later he turned and threw a snowball at her. It hit her in the face and hurt her badly; and her foot slipping upon the icy pavement, she fell. A moment elapsed before she was able to rise; but at last she got up, and although she was cold and weak and greatly discouraged, she thought she would press on. She might never have so good a chance again; and if she did not see Kris Kringle now, Christmas would come, and he would come and go, and there would be no doll for her.

While she was standing there, in a very miserable frame of mind, a nicely dressed lady went past her. Presently the lady turned and looked at her; then she came back to where Jinnie stood and spoke to her.

"What is your name, my child?" asked the lady.

"Virginia, ma'am. But Mrs. Tyke generally calls me Jinnie." She had never heard so sweet a voice. It seemed so beautiful, so gentle, so full of tender pity, that it thrilled her with a strange joy.

"And where are you going?"

"I am going out to Ohio, to see Kris Kringle."

The lady smiled; but the smile faded into a look of deep compassion, and she said:

"Did your mother let you come away from home?"

"I have no mother. I'm a bound girl."

"Who sent you to find Kris Kringle?"

"Nobody. He always forgets to come to our house, so I was goin' to put him in mind."

"Don't you get any toys or candy on Christmas?'

"No, ma'am. Mrs. Tyke won't give me any, and Kris Kringle forgets me. And I never tasted candy but once."

"Is Mrs. Tyke the woman you live with?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Does she treat you kindly?"

"Whips me and knocks me down sometimes."

"Will you go back to her?"

"Oh yes, ma'am. I am going right back as soon as I see Kris Kringle."

The lady took her hand and resolved to go back with her, and to see the terrible Mrs. Tyke. She told Jinnie so, and Jinnie submitted, although she was grieved to forego her errand.

"Do you know who Kris Kringle really is?" the lady asked.

"Yes; he brings nice things down the chimbley to children."

"He does better things than that, my dear. The real Kris Kringle is the Christ-child."

"Who is He?"

"Did you never hear anybody tell of Christ?"

"No, ma'am."

"He is God. He came down here to live upon earth, where He suffered and died for us. He loved little children, for He was Himself once a child."

"Was He little, like me?"

"Yes."

"How did He suffer?"

"Wicked men insulted Him and beat Him and killed Him."

"Did they beat Him and strike Him like they do me?"

"Yes, my poor child."

"What makes Him love me? Because I am beaten just like He was?"

"Yes, yes, that is it. But He loves everybody, good and bad."

"He doesn't know Mrs. Tyke, does He?"

"He knows everybody in the world."

"Where is He now?"

"Up in Heaven?"

"Is that farther than Ohio?"

"Yes, that is far, far away in the skies."

"Then how does He get here? I always thought the real Kris Kringle came down chimbleys."

"He comes in your heart, my dear child. You will understand it all some day."

The lady seemed strangely moved as she said this to Jinnie; but she said nothing, and led Jinnie through the street, towards the child's home.

When Jinnie and her companion reached Mrs. Tyke's house and rang the bell, Mrs. Tyke herself came to the door and opened it. As soon as she saw Jinnie she poured out at her a volley of abusive words, without regarding the presence of the lady who accompanied her. The lady remonstrated with Mrs. Tyke, and then Mrs. Tyke assailed her with her tongue. The lady then told Mrs. Tyke that she knew of the cruel treatment to which the child had been subjected, and that she would interfere if it were repeated.

Jinnie was astonished that any one should be so bold as to speak with so much severity to Mrs. Tyke. The response made to this threat by Mrs. Tyke was to seize Jinnie by the arm, to drag her suddenly into the hallway, and to slam the door in the lady's face.

The lady stood upon the step and listened. She could hear Mrs. Tyke beating the child and cursing her; and then the sounds receded, as if Mrs. Tyke were dragging Jinnie into a room at the end of the hallway. Mrs. Tyke was in a paroxysm of fury; and she intended to visit upon Jinnie the vengeance she would have liked to inflict upon Jinnie's unknown friend.

Beating was too common and too tame a form of punishment. Mrs. Tyke's ingenuity devised a more terrible one. She made the child remove her shoes, and then she tied her upon a chair, with her naked feet within a few inches of the hot stove. In that position she left Jinnie, who bore the frightful pain bravely, until presently she fainted.

If there is no hell, what is going to become of people like Mrs. Tyke?

When Jinnie regained consciousness, Mrs. Tyke sternly ordered her to go up to bed; and Jinnie crawled up the staircase slowly and painfully upon her hands and knees, suffering so much that she could hardly help screaming aloud.

She reached her room at last, and flung herself down upon the bed. Her pain was so great that it was a long while before she could go to sleep; and she lay there thinking with all her might about Kris

Kringle and the doll baby, and her adventures in the street, and wondering if she should ever be any happier. Then she remembered what little Miss Brown had said about praying, and what the sweet lady had told her about the Christ-child and His wondrous love; and so she thought she would try to pray to Him; and praying, she fell asleep.

The lady who brought Jinnie home turned away with her soul filled with indignation at Mrs. Tyke's cruelty to the child, and she determined to have it ended. She knew a man, Thomas Elwood, who was active in the service of the Society for Protecting Children from Cruelty, and she went to his house. He was a very plain Friend; a young man, and of a fair countenance. He was at home with his wife, and both expressed deep interest in the visitor's story. The visitor left with the assurance from Elwood that the case would receive attention early the next morning.

Next morning, when Mrs. Tyke called Jinnie, Jinnie tried to rise, but found that she could not: she was too feeble and wretched. Mrs. Tyke saw this, and she did not compel Jinnie to get up. Mrs. Tyke was beginning to be frightened. So Jinnie fell asleep again, and when she awoke it was broad daylight, and a man with what seemed to be an angelic face was standing beside her. It was Thomas Elwood. Jinnie was startled; her first impression was that this was Kris Kringle, come in answer to her prayer. But when Jinnie looked at the finger-hole she had made in the fire-board and at the man, and particularly at the circumference of his hat, it seemed

to her impossible, if this was Kris Kringle, that he should have come in by way of Mrs. Tyke's chimney.

Thomas Elwood spoke to her and asked her if she suffered much. She said yes, and then she asked him if he really was Kris Kringle.

Thomas smiled and said:

"No, dear child; but I am thy friend, and I am going to take thee away from this misery and keep thee until thee is well again."

Then he lifted Jinnie in his arms, bore her downstairs and out, and placed her in a carriage.

"Where is Mrs. Tyke?" thought Jinnie. Mrs. Tyke was at a magistrate's office, listening to Mrs. Brown and others of the neighbors while they testified of her brutal treatment of Jinnie. The lady who had brought Jinnie home was there also; and Jinnie was kindly pressed by the magistrate to tell what Mrs. Tyke had done to her.

Mrs. Tyke gave bail and went home. Thomas Elwood took Jinnie to his own house, and his wife wept as he told her how the child had been tortured. She carried Jinnie upstairs and washed her, and dressed her in clothes that Jinnie thought were wonderful, though they were so plain. Then she kissed Jinnie and said to her:

"I once had a little girl of thy age; but a year ago she died. She even looked like thee, my dear."

Jinnie was so weak that she had to lie upon the bed when the washing and dressing were over; "and such a bed!" thought Jinnie. Thomas Elwood's wife brought some breakfast up to her, and Jinnie thought that she had never tasted anything so good.

She did not know that such delicious food could be found anywhere in the world.

Jinnie grew better and stronger in a few days, and Thomas Elwood and his wife became so much attached to her that they resolved that they would keep her and adopt her in the place of the child that had been taken away from them.

Jinnie was very happy, and she talked freely with them. She told them about her search for Kris Kringle, and about that splendid doll she saw in the window on the night she went to the strange baker's.

Although entertaining sentiments which forbade any enthusiasm for Christmas and Kris Kringle, and dolls in gorgeous apparel, something impelled Thomas Elwood to go to see that special doll.

That night, as he sat with his wife in front of the grate fire in the sitting-room, she said to him, Jinnie being in bed:

"Thomas, does thee think there would be any harm in giving Virginia a little pleasure on the 25th of this month?"

"How does thee mean, Rachel?"

"Well, she seems to have her little head filled with nonsense about Kris Kringle and Christmas, and as the poor child has had a life so full of misery, I thought, perhaps, we might——"

"Thee doesn't mean to keep Christmas in this house, does thee?"

"Not exactly that, but——"

"What would Friends say if we should do that?"

"No; but there can be no harm in giving the poor

child some playthings, and we may as well give them upon one day as another."

"What kind of playthings would thee give her?"

"Why not buy her a doll? She seemed to like that doll at Thomas Smith's store very much."

"But, Rachel, that doll was dressed in a most worldly manner. Ought we to risk filling the child's mind with vain and frivolous notions about dress?"

"She has hardly had a chance to feed her vanity in that manner thus far."

"Thee would be willing, then," said Thomas, "to buy for her that gaily-dressed doll?"

"I think I would; just this once."

"Well," said Thomas, slowly, "I am glad to hear thee say so, because today I bought that very doll." And he produced it from a bundle that he took from under the sofa.

Kris Kringle came to Jinnie that Christmas eve, and in the morning her joy as she clasped the doll in her arms was so great that she could not express it. While she was at the breakfast table Thomas Elwood was called to the parlor to see a visitor. Presently he summoned Jinnie, and when Jinnie came into the room she was startled to see Mrs. Tyke. It flashed across her mind that Mrs. Tyke had come to take her away, and she began to cry. Thomas Elwood comforted her. Mrs. Tyke had came to beg for mercy. She wished to escape prosecution.

Thomas turned to Jinnie and said:

"Virginia, this is the woman who has done thee so much harm. I can have her punished if I wish. What would thee do to her if thee had thy way?"

"I would forgive her," said Jinnie, timidly.

It seemed as if Jinnie had been visited also by the *real* Kris Kringle. Mrs. Tyke was permitted to go unpunished.

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